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A FEARFUL CONFRONTATION and A PAINFUL CONFESSION

I have always been honest with you about my walk with God, my sins and failures and victories, but this is awful. You may have regarded me as a father in the faith and a great example, but I am in trouble with God. About a week ago God started confronting me about some unrepented sin that I have allowed to cling to me for most of my life - even after many great breakthroughs with Him, and I am devastated. The Bible tells us that in order to overcome sin, 1st to confess it to God (1 John 1:9), and 2nd to confess it to another trusted person in order to be healed (James 5:16). I have already confessed it to several friends, and I certainly don't have to confess my folly to the world, but I don't care about my reputation if what God has revealed to me might be pleasing to God and of some benefit to you in your walk.

Years ago, in 1973 when I was a pastor, God dealt with me, and many demons were cast out of me. The first three that I remember were: (1) a spirit of pride. This surprised me because I didn't know I was prideful and God showed me that I was, terribly. (2) a spirit of fornication. This was connected to my involvement with pornography from a teenager. (3) a spirit named Torquemada. We finally remembered that Torquemada was the leader of the Spanish Inquisition which was connected to the fiendish torture and murder of Christians. This was a demon of torture, and I immediately connected it to a time when my gang of boys, around 12 or 14, pretended to torture a dummy in our playhouse. You would be surprised at how demons can invade a person. Subsequent to that childish time I was haunted by fantasies of me being tortured and every time I read about it or saw it on TV I would cringe with fear and loathing.

Then again, after I retired as pastor, God showed me in a dream that in all my time as pastor, I had been elevating myself in my preaching instead of Jesus. All pride. This was after I retired,

and it was the most devastating moment in my life up till the present.

Last week God started convicting me about the ongoing sin in my life. I was shocked because there has not been any anger or unforgiveness, nothing dishonest or immoral with others ever. But He was referring to something internal in my heart, the Bible calls it iniquity; and He was specifically calling me out about my disobedience to Him. I had allowed some pride to come back in, and although I had never again watched porn, I had allowed some unclean images to remain in my mind that I entertained pretty often. God had warned me about this again and again. I would repent and then allow it to return. God had told me it is not repentance unless you obey Him and stop whatever. "But," I reminded God, "I have been serving you all these years, going on mission trips and to prisons, holding classes, ministering to wounded people, reading the Bible, giving a tithe, praying personally and attending a weekly prayer meeting." God said to me, and I heard Him clearly, "It is all for nothing unless you are obedient to Me." That scared the socks off of me.

Then God reminded me of chapter 15 in 1 Samuel. God had told King Saul to attack the Amalekites and destroy them totally, along with all their animals. Saul led his army in doing this, but he left alive King Agag and the best of their flocks and herds "in order to sacrifice them to God." In other words, he disobeyed God for a good religious reason. The Prophet Samuel responded to Saul in Vs. 22 - "Does the Lord delight in offerings and sacrifices (doing things to serve the Lord) as much as obeying the voice of the Lord. To obey is better than sacrifice....For rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and arrogance (pride) like idolatry."

And God said He was through with Saul, He deposed him as king, because of this little disobedience!

God spoke to me farther and called me to a 3-day fast, no food and only water to drink. I have never completed more than a 1-day fast and have trouble with those because they are uncomfortable, but I started the fast eagerly in order to do penance to the Lord. I made it through the 1st day easily. I

spent most of the day and night, since I couldn't sleep, reading Jeremiah - which I felt God told me to read. It is a heavy book, but I have felt since first being a Christian that it was mysteriously for me. The 2nd day was more difficult but barely attainable.

By the 3rd morning I felt sick and weak and whispered, "I can't do it." God spoke immediately, "You can if you will!" Then He unloaded on me: "Whenever anyone says 'I can't do it,' it is a lie. They can do anything I call them to do with my help. What they are really saying is 'I won't do it.'" Then He said, "I have called you time and again to a fast in order to break the hold of pride and lust, but you have always stopped short because of a little suffering. But to follow my Son always involves suffering. The fear of suffering has ruled your life." (I subsequently remembered Torquemada, the demon of torture and pain. That demon was apparently still ruling my life.)

Then God said to me: "I have kept you alive all these years (94) because you have been truly seeking Me and to give you one final chance. Unless you finish this fast, and truly repent of the uncleanness that has remained in you, I am through with you." That really scared me and I said, "What do you mean, you are through with me, that I wouldn't go to heaven." He said, "That is what I mean." That really took my breath and I am still reeling from it.

God apparently values obedience to Him above everything else, and if you are thinking of Scriptures to refute this, let me say that I am not trying to introduce some new theology and all I am reporting is obviously subjective and you are free to reject all of it, but I am just telling what I heard. (Also, if you will read an old book by David Bercot named, "Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up," it may give you pause.)

God said to me, "You have gone through much failure in your ministry. If you had obeyed me in this one thing, I would have blessed you with much more fruit." That broke my heart. Then I asked him about a friend of mine, a missionary in Mexico for 40 years. He was the best Bible scholar I have ever known and arose at 4 AM every morning to walk and pray for two hours before his Bible time. But he was a very hateful man. He talked to his wife like a dog, and he spent the last 20 years of his life trying to destroy his eldest son, who was also in ministry in Mexico. I asked, "Lord, is he in heaven?" He said, "He is in heaven, but as one

who has passed through the fire, and he lost all rewards for his lifetime of sacrifice for Me." (See I Cor. 3:10-15) That made me feel great relief but also sadness for what might have been.

Then God said to me, "Many times when you have read about my servants in other countries being tortured because they would not recant their faith, I have heard the words in your mind when you said that you could not stand that and that you would deny Christ rather than go through torture. How do you think that makes Me feel when you say that?" And then He said, "If you deny Me, I will deny you!"

Again, this took my breath, and I remembered 2 Timothy 2:12 - "If we endure suffering, we will reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will deny us." Peter denied Jesus three times, but the Lord allowed him to repent and be restored. Jesus warned the disciples repeatedly that they would emulate Him by suffering and to stand fast. (See John 14-17) I said, "Lord, forgive me for saying that and help me to be faithful when the persecution and suffering begins." (I am certain that it will begin soon.)

Finally 1: If you doubt that God talks to people, then of course you are not a believer. If you doubt that God talks in the straightforward, natural, and at times blunt way that I have reported, then you haven't read your Bible. If you don't believe in demons, you don't believe the Bible. If you believe that God is a God of love but never a God of judgment and that He judges every person who ever lives on this earth for everything that they ever did, said, or thought- you surely have never read or believed either the Old or New Testaments. God is a God of love and demonstrated that by sending His Son to die on the cross for us. God forgives us for our sins not because he is merciful, but because Christ shed His blood for us and we have repented and trusted Him to save us. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Finally 2: I have not been the man I should have been and that you may have thought I was. I am so sorry.

I am in the process of my third day of fasting and repenting even as I write this. All I can ask of you is that you forgive me and pray for me.

Glenn

Finally 3

After I went to bed and was sleeping on this letter, I awoke realizing that there may be some who read this who think: "This is demented.

Whoever this old man is, he is living in a fantasy world with a talking God and demons. He believes in the Bible, which everyone knows is ancient mythology put together by misguided religious zealots. He believes in a "God" who actually talks to people and is concerned with our personal lives, even with our thought-lives, values, and personal sex lives. He thinks there is an afterlife, that death is not the end but that when we die we will go before this "God" to be judged - - and that we will either go to a "heaven" up in the sky or to a "hell" where we will be punished forever. This is utter insanity, created in the minds of unstable, lower class fools. Something needs to be done about people who are allowed to spew this vomit and contaminate others. They need to be stopped, to be controlled. Society needs to do something. They should be put in prison and dealt with. In a civilized, educated society, we simply cannot allow this vermin to exist."

Finally 4

There may be some Christians who read this letter who will be terribly embarrassed and would agree with my former Bishop.

Back in 1970 I had graduated from the seminary of a major Christian denomination and was pastor of a large church in northern Colorado. But I had backslidden into my old sins of alcohol, pornography, and anger at my wife. God mercifully rescued me through an experience with the Holy Spirit, and demons were cast out of me. My denomination didn't believe in either the Baptism of the Holy Spirit or in demons, nor had I up to that point. I was so grateful to God. And it changed my preaching, of course. I didn't preach about the things I had just experienced, I started preaching about salvation, that people needed to receive Christ as their Savior, repent of their sins, and that heaven and hell were at issue.

Many in that mainline church had never heard those things and were terribly offended. But our church prospered, doubled in size, and became vital. Time passed, and the Bishop, along with six District Superintendents, called me on the carpet at headquarters. He asked me if our church had been sending visitors into the homes of strangers asking if they had reached the place in their spiritual lives that they knew they were going to heaven, and then presenting the plan of salvation. I told him that yes, we had trained our people to do that.

The Bishop became furious! His face was red and his teeth were bared. He said, "How dare you!

To go into homes representing our (name) Church with that ignorant fundamental Gospel. You are an embarrassment to our Church." He continued to excoriate me for the next three hours.

At the end of that session, I felt as if I had been beaten with rods. The Bishop forced me out of that denomination.

I am sure that many Christians, good people, raised in "normal" Christian churches, may not agree with the Bishop about salvation and heaven and hell, but in view of my other "radical" beliefs, they will agree that I am an embarrassment to the Christian church at large and would hope that I would be quiet. I understand. I became a Christian in such a church to my everlasting gratitude, and it was not by my choice but by my disintegration and God's mercy that I was propelled into a frightening and wonderful new vista. I certainly believe this new perspective is true and Biblical, but I bless you in your different faith and practice.

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THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

One day last month when I went yard-saling with my daughter and sister, I found an old book that is maybe one of the most enlightening books I have ever read. Since I read a lot of books, two or three a week, that is saying a lot.

It is about the lives and theology of the early Christians, the first 300 years, and I never heard of most of this information before. The author was David W. Bercot, and the name of the book is Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up. I wish every pastor in the country would read this book.

I will share some of it in my next Newsletter.

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HOT CHOCOLATE

On Sunday, November 7th, at the little outdoor church in Kimwood Park, Chet Brown had the morning message about the feeding of the 5,000. This story about Jesus' miracle is the only story that is in all four Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, so it must be important.

As a part of the message, Chet asked Bob Clifford, who is Associate Pastor of Canyon View Vineyard Church, our big mother church here in Grand Junction, to relate an experience that happened to some people from our church a few years ago.

It is the custom in Grand Junction that during the Christmas season each year we have "Parade of Lights" in our downtown. Our Vineyard Church does not have a float, but we participate by passing out hot chocolate to the spectators. If anyone asks why we are doing that, our people respond: "We are just demonstrating the love of God in a practical way."

On that evening, the team had many large orange coolers filled with hot milk chocolate. Each cooler held 80 cups, and we had enough for about a thousand people. There was a large attendance at the parade, and the team realized that they were going to run out. Bob said he looked in the last cooler and saw three or four inches of hot milk chocolate left - enough for maybe twenty people. One of the guys said, "What are we going to do?" Bob said he told them we would just serve the chocolate till we ran out and then close down.

But one of the ladies said, "We could pray." Bob said he rolled his eyes, but they all laid hands on the cooler and asked God's blessing.

So they continued filling up cups and passing them out, but they didn't run out. Many people formed a line and some of them filled their own thermos bottles. The team looked at one another with big, round eyes. They knew something strange was happening. They started calling to other people to come for a cup of hot chocolate and guesstimated that they served about 200 additional people. Finally, when they had served the last person, the cooler made a noise and ran out of hot chocolate.

Good night! That was ridiculous. Who would believe a crazy thing like that? I think the Lord has a great sense of humor.

Our God, our Creator, our Savior, is apparently looking for opportunities to demonstrate His love in a practical way. If we will test Him by demonstrating our faith, we might be surprised to find that the stories in the Bible are not fairy tales but reports of actions by a supernatural God.

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