

## The Rest of the Story

Joe Slater

The late Paul Harvey often ended his commentary with some interesting tale having an unexpected twist. His trademark ending: “And now you know . . . the rest . . . of the story. Good day!”

Knowing “the rest of the story” often keeps us from making fools of ourselves. Wise Solomon observed, “*The first one to plead his cause seems right until his neighbor comes and examines him*” (Proverbs 18:17). Indeed, there are at least two sides to every story, and many can “spin” their particular side to make it sound conclusive. But when someone else presents “the rest of the story,” what first seemed obvious may become far less clear. That’s why defense attorneys cross examine the prosecution’s witnesses and vice versa. The jury needs to hear all sides to reach a just verdict.

After the conquest of Canaan, the Transjordan tribes erected an altar to symbolize their identity with the tribes west of the river in the worship of the Lord. The western tribes, however, feared that their eastern brethren were establishing a rival system of worship in rebellion to the Lord, so they prepared for war. Fortunately, before firing a shot, the eastern tribes asked their brethren to explain why they had built that altar. Hearing “the rest of the story” satisfied them that no apostasy was occurring, and no war was called for (Joshua 22:10-34).

Let us strenuously avoid the common tendency to rush to judgment! Someone said that a falsehood can run halfway around the world before the truth can get its shoes tied. And for whatever reasons, people tend to believe the worst. Speaking for myself, I’ve been called everything from a “liberal” to a “Pharisee.” And those are just the ones I know about!

Before reaching any conclusion, be certain you have the facts – all of them!

## Motion and Emotion

Satan loves for us to get worked up and then slowly let the gravity of life bring us back down to the level of idle do-nothings. The behavior pattern of emotion → inaction is what he loves to cultivate because it lets us have a sense of righteousness without actually accomplishing anything. It’s a pattern. Avoid it!

Develop the pattern of Informed Action Educated By Truth. Newton’s First Law of Motion says that a body at rest tends to stay at rest unless some force acts upon it. A body in motion will continue in motion unless some external force overpowers it. Satan loves for us to stay at rest. We must provide the energy to move against Him. With Christ’s help, we can continue moving in the right direction as long as we have the will to resist the forces that would deter or misdirect.

--Jared Jackson (via *Fortify Your Faith*)

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## Loving The Truth

*Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”* (John 18:37-38)

In our postmodern culture, people’s imaginations offer ideas that defy truth. We are surrounded by fantasies, myths, dysphoria, and confusion. It’s more troubling that deceived people demand everyone else give in to their imaginary ways and morals. When people are unwilling to play along with a lie, they are immediately called meanspirited and abusive. They are convinced their confusion gives them the moral high ground to condemn others.

Isaiah wrote, “*Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!*” (Isaiah 5:20-21). The Lord Jesus is our source of truth (John 1:14; 8:31-32; 14:6). If we want the truth, we listen to Him! Skeptical Pilate, like many today, lived in confusion because he listens to the voices of the human powers, human religious leaders, and the crowds. These voices lead us away from God. People of the truth listen to Jesus. He is the real voice of truth.

--Phil Sanders

## ***Feasting and Lounging***

“**Woe to you who are at ease in Zion**” (Amos 6:1)

It’s easy to read the details of the prophets as condemnation of ancient, foreign practices unrelated to our own 21<sup>st</sup>-century western existence. I have been recently convicted, however, that Amos’ description of Israel’s complacency isn’t too far removed from elements of our own culture.

In Amos 6:4-7 the prophet mocks the people for everything from “*beds inlaid with ivory*” to dining on “*choice lambs and fatted calves*” to using “*the finest lotions.*” At first glance the list sounds far removed from today. If we substitute “*sheets with high thread count,*” “*any cut of meat any time of year,*” and “*the latest cosmetics,*” however, Amos’ description suddenly hits closer to home. The last words of the passage are ominous: “*Your feasting and lounging will end*” (6:7).

Have you become complacent about the place Jesus has in your life? I know I have often focused more on comfort, leisure, and relaxation than on what I need to be doing for God. Let us not fall into Israel’s trap, “*feasting and lounging*” our way into complacency!

--Josh Boyd (via *Power for Today*) adapted