

To Whom Shall We Go?

Joe Slater

Sometimes, even oftentimes, the truth irritates us. But a wise old saying goes thus: “If the truth rubs the cat’s fur the wrong way, turn that cat around!”

Jesus always spoke the truth. People didn’t always like it. When He fed the 5000, many were so impressed they wanted to make Him king! But others challenged Him to supply bread like Moses supplied manna in the wilderness. Feeding 5000 one time was good, but feeding over two million every day for forty years would be even better, or so they thought.

Jesus pointed out that their ancestors who ate manna died; He, on the other hand, was the “bread of life.” One who came to Him in trusting obedience would not die (John 6:31-51). Of course His critics misunderstood, thinking in fleshly terms rather than spiritual. As a result, “many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more” (6:66). Truth rubbed their fur the wrong way! “Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life’” (6:67-68).

Some things Jesus said are hard to understand; others are hard to accept even when we understand them. But let our response be that of Peter! He didn’t ask, “to what” or “to where” shall we go? It was “To whom?” If not to Jesus, then to whom? Yes, we should go to the Bible – but why do we trust the Bible? Because we trust its Author! Our ultimate confidence isn’t in ink on paper, but in the God who had His divine word written and preserved for us. To whom shall we go? No one else is worthy of such trust.

If God’s word rubs your fur the wrong way, turn that cat around!

Living Peaceably

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:18, ESV).

The woman looked at me with a scowl on her face. “You’re being short with me.”

“I didn’t mean to sound short,” I said. “I didn’t hear you, and I needed you to repeat it.”

“No, no, you were being short with me. I don’t have to stand for it!” she said loudly so everyone could hear. “And I don’t have to put up with it!” With that, she turned and left.

I felt two inches high. I knew it would do no good to try to persuade her otherwise, even if I had the chance.

We have all been misunderstood. Like Hannah when she was pouring out her soul to God and was misunderstood by the priest, our motives are not always judged correctly. When that happens, we feel defeated and disheartened.

What can we do when we are misunderstood? Becoming angry solves nothing. “For lack of wood the fire goes out,” we read in Proverbs 26:20. Instead of giving way to anger, we should try to restate what we said and clarify what we meant.

We should try to put ourselves in the other person’s shoes. Perhaps the one who accuses us wrongly has had a bad day. “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.” (Eph. 4:2).

Remember that we, too, make mistakes. If someone accuses us of not listening or saying something we should not have said, be quick to apologize. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:9). If we think like Jesus and act like Jesus, we are His friends and children of God.

--Donna Wittlif (Ft. Worth, TX)

We Are Never Alone

How he got there nobody knows. But there was a fourth figure walking in the midst of the fire along with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. His appearance, as described by Nebuchadnezzar, was “like the son of the gods!” (Daniel 3:25). Charles Spurgeon observed that “As sure as...God puts his children in the furnace He will be in the furnace with them.” We are never alone.

Loneliness intensifies pain in suffering while the support of friends and loved ones lightens the load. A timely note, a visit, or a telephone call can make all the difference to someone in physical or emotional pain. We are social beings who need companionship. Following the creation of Adam, God assessed the situation and observed, “It is not good for the man to be alone...” (Genesis 2:18). Things have not changed. God’s family, the church, is designed to meet one another’s needs. Paul said, “Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). We are in this together.

But there is a greater Comforter, God Himself, who says, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ So that we may confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?’” (Heb. 13:5-6). In the words of a well-known song, we pray, “When other helpers fail, and comforts flee, help of the helpless, O abide with Me!” We are never alone. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

When we feel weak in our struggle against heartache and discouragement, there is one who is walking with us in the midst of the fire. His name is Jesus. His devotion is unquestioned and His love incomprehensible (Ephesians 3:19). We are never alone.

--Glen Elliott (Greenbriar, AR)