

PENTECOST: SHARING NEW LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

The Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist
October 18, 2010

Isaiah 35:5-8

Psalm 124

2 Timothy 4:5-11

Luke 1:1-4; 24:44-53

Can You Handle the Truth?

In the well known movie, *A Few Good Men*, Tom Cruz (Kaffee) in his role as prosecuting attorney, demands the truth surrounding a code red order issued to some US Marines. In response, the witness, Jack Nicholson (Col. Jessep) shouts, “You can’t handle the truth!” and he was right. By the end of the case, the information revealed destroyed the career of not only the corrupt Marines, but also of a few good men whose only crime was in carrying out the instructions of their superiors. Many times we ask for the truth, but we are not prepared to deal with what it is.

In the Gospel according to Luke, the Lord takes his disciples aside and reminds them that everything in the Law of Moses, written of him, had to happen – his suffering, death and resurrection. Jesus perceived their apprehensions and reminded them, “These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: everything written about me...had to come true” (Luke 24:44, *GNT*). That said, it is not always easy to accept the truth. The disciples had heard that Jesus would have been cruelly killed and that he would rise again, yet when those things happened, they acted like unbelievers. They had heard through the prophet Isaiah that “The blind will be able to see, and the deaf will hear” (Isaiah 35:5, *GNT*), yet when Jesus performed these miracles, some still wondered if he were the Messiah.

Jesus knew the truth of his coming into the world, and though he prayed that his suffering and death be averted, he knew that he had to fulfill this mission. As Jesus bids farewell to his disciples at his ascension, he commissions them saying, “You are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48, *GNT*). They are commanded to tell the truth as it unfolded before their very eyes – whether people wanted to hear them or not.

The Apostle Paul also knew the truth. He understood quite well that as Christ followers we might be called upon to risk our lives for the cause of the Gospel. True, no one likes to hear that he or she might suffer affliction and possibly be killed. In Paul’s words to Timothy, his son in the Gospel, he admonishes him to “endure suffering, [and] do the work of a preacher of the Good News” (2 Tim 4:5, *GNT*). The truth of the matter is that Paul is emphasizing the reality of the Christian’s path, in that we should be ready to give our lives in service to God’s Kingdom. Like Paul we should be able to say, “As for me, the hour has come for me to be sacrificed” (2

Timothy 4:6a, *GNT*). This truth is sometimes scary, but perfect love for Christ will cause those fears to cease.

Our consolation is that while the truth is sometimes unbearable, we have an assurance that the journey will end well for those who remain faithful in our walk with Christ. Like the Apostle Paul, will you be able to say, “I have done my best in the race . . . and I have kept the faith” (2 Tim 4:7, *GNT*)? We know that we walk this pathway with victory already in our grasp, and we walk with confidence because the Lord is on our side. With Christ in our hearts, we can handle the truth, because we know that he has empowered us to face the challenges of our day. Let us shout the Good News of Christ every chance we get, so that all can come to know the truth about our Savior.

This week’s Reflection was prepared by Davina McDonald, Editorial Senior Specialist at the Nida Institute of Biblical Scholarship.

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A prayer for use on the Feast of Saint Luke – Almighty God, who inspired your servant Luke the physician to set forth in the Gospel the love and healing power of your Son: Graciously continue in your Church this love and power to heal, to the praise and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen*

Activity Corner: “Truth or Dare”

Supplies Needed: Bible, strips of white paper, small bag, pens/pencils

Read Psalm 124. Arrange the group in a semicircle and invite them to share a testimony of God’s protection in their lives. Pass around the small bag and allow each person to take a strip of white paper, on which is already written the words “truth” or “dare.” Each person should be encouraged to write on the blank side either a Scripture verse that speaks of God’s protection, or a dare, i.e. an action that someone else in the group will have to do – for example, “Call an unsaved friend and tell him that Jesus loves him.” Gather the strips back in the bag and shake it, then pass the bag around for each person to draw a strip of paper. Ideally, persons should not keep the same strip that he or she had written on. Those who receive truths will share what is written with the entire group, and comment on the verse chosen. Those who receive dares should carry out the actions before leaving the group session.