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TRUTH WINS

What are some things you have thought or done in the shadows, ashamed of others to know?

How do you change when you are in plain view of others?

Consider the loving encouragement Jesus offers by His continual presence. How does it help you live your best life knowing Jesus is always watching?

2 Corinthians 4:2 – We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

I) In Plain View...

There are times we would prefer to be away from everyone. We are tired of being watched and heard. There is a freedom that comes from moments of solitude. This is normal, healthy behavior. Then there are the thoughts and actions we always hide. Those are exclusively for our time alone, or with those who share the same desires, because others wouldn't approve. We don't approve. We do it anyway because there is a part of us that likes it. If others knew, we'd be forced to confront our duplicity. Either we are ashamed of our values and pretend they are different, or we make excuses to live outside of them. Until we allow Jesus to heal our hearts and restore our integrity. Then we can fully live in plain view.

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♦**Out of the shadows**: Once Jesus heals our heart and persuades us to figure out what we value and to live proudly, “we have renounced the shameful things that one hides (2 Corinthians 4:2).” We come out of the shadows and live freely. Some of our values fit the cultural norm and are easy to express openly. Others stand in contrast. Either way, exhausted from pretending, we enjoy the rest that comes from living freely in the integrity of what we believe. We will gladly pay the price of being somewhat odd.

♦**The truth**: The truth is somewhat odd. An unseen power greater than any we imagine, finite creatures designed to represent the infinite, life from death. None of this is instinctive and obvious. Yet it rings true. Once we are comfortable in our own skin living in plain sight, “we refuse to practice cunning (v2).” Satan has mastered half-truths that deceive and lead astray by intentionally ignoring the uncomfortable parts. We say it like it is and do our best to live according to what we say.

II) **We Stand...**

As we grow more comfortable in our integrity, we stand taller and prouder in view of everyone. It becomes clear to us this is not incidental to life—it is life. Human essence inhabits the image of God in His full character. The sinful compulsion to survive in the shadows is vampiric, an absurd existence that drives one mad. Salvation is the discovery that a free, open life of integrity satisfies our spiritual craving like nothing else.

♦**The whole truth**: My truth. Another phrase the devil has appropriated and misconstrued. We should live by our truth. It’s uniquely personal based on our experiences. It also is a specific manifestation of universal truth. When the world deceives people into justifying sin by incorporating it into our personal truth because it feels good, the devil is leading sheep to the slaughter. We refuse “to falsify God’s word (v2),” because it is the whole truth. Additions and subtractions both pervert it. Our truth fits perfectly within God’s word when we live with the integrity of the values necessary to follow Jesus. We are each representative pieces that combine to express the fullness of God.

♦**Nothing but the truth**: When we understand the relationship between us and Jesus, new possibilities open for us. We become “the open statement of the truth (v2),” by our lives. We grow bolder, not just stepping out of the shadows, but moving into open spaces visible to many. We want others to know nothing but the truth. We become aware our lives are the only means by which some will find it. Jesus put Himself out in the open for many to see and hear so that they would know the truth. History proves reading it is insufficient. It must be discovered in another. In us. In you.

III) **Eager For Judgment...**

So, we are eager for judgment. Not Judgment Day, per se, but daily judgment. Daily judgment arrives in layers. The first layer is being a living truth for any to see. To be proud of our Creator. Holy pride begets divine pleasure. Once our hearts are transformed, we desire nothing more than to please God by our lives. We want Him to assure us continually that we are worthy of His creative, redemptive, sustaining work. We are worthy of His love. We have entered the virtuous cycle.

♦**Look closely**: This is not another form of pursuing fame and fortune. We do not stand in full view so that others know our name. We invite them to look closely for the impression of our Lord. We invoke the name Jesus when “we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone (v2).” Notice, we are not performing for the desires of the flesh, but the inner spirit of our audience. The discerning heart God keeps faintly beating within everyone so that they recognize Him when we present His image. Without this act of mercy, we’d all be lost.

♦**Before the judge**: Lest we become sinful in pride, Jesus is always watching. Whoever else is there, we stand before the judge. “In the sight of God (v2),” our motives are under examination. The common observer judges our words and deeds while Jesus judges our thoughts. Perfect actions from impure thoughts are false. The duality of sinful actions alongside pure thoughts is false. Only loving actions resting on holy thoughts are true. In the end, truth wins.