

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM JOEL (4/21/18)

Q: What is it that brings us under the government of God, under the protection of God, under the healing influence of God? What is it that maintains us under the healing influence of God?

A: The answer is that the beginning of wisdom—that is, the starting step on the spiritual path—is **knowing the truth**. Now, I don't mean just any statement of truth that you happen to think is the truth, or statements of truth that you have read. There's nothing in Scripture about knowing some untruth and calling it the truth. The statement "*Ye shall know the truth*"¹ means exactly that—**ye** shall know the truth. And you cannot, in all fairness to yourself, merely pick up a book on metaphysics or on spiritual truth and say, "Oh, this is the truth that I am supposed to know." There are far too many books containing untruth under the guise of truth. The Master warned us about all of the teachings, all of the teachers, who say, "Christ, Christ," and there is no Christ there.

There are no organizations and there are no individuals capable of drawing up a list of the books that are truth and the books that are not truth. You cannot go anywhere on the face of the globe and get advice, for there is no one capable of giving that advice. Each one has to turn within and ask, "Is this book a book of truth? Is this teaching a teaching of truth? Is this He that I seek? Is this '*he that should come*'?" To ask anyone's advice is weakness and foolishness. Each one of us has a guiding instinct within ourselves, and it is to this that we must go and find out whether or not we are on the spiritual path, whether we are on the path of truth. And then when conviction comes to us, let us act on it without anyone's advice or consent.

Should we make a mistake at any time, do not even fear that, because as long as there is sincerity in your heart; as long as you're truly seeking the spiritual way; the mistake will soon be corrected, and you will find your teacher or your teaching. But when you find the truth, your journey hasn't ended. It has only begun, because now you have to *know* the truth; you have to *abide* in the truth; you have to let the word of truth abide in you. You have to pray with that word of truth without ceasing. You have to live and move and have your being in that truth. You have to put that truth up here on your forehead, and you have to bind it on your arm, and you have to place it on your gatepost at the entrance to your home. Everywhere your eye turns, it has to find that truth for you to look at, to remember, to repeat, to realize. Truth has to be kept closer to you than your skin. Then you are abiding in truth. Then you are praying without ceasing. Then you are knowing the truth. Then the truth is doing its work in you.

Now, the reading of truth and the hearing of truth is not itself the truth that heals or redeems. It is the truth that you take into your consciousness and dwell with, ponder, think upon, meditate upon, cogitate. It is the truth, not in the book called the Bible, but the truth that you take out of the Bible into your consciousness and dwell with. It does very little good to look at the Bible and read that "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*"² That statement won't do anything for anyone. You take it out of the Bible into your consciousness, and you ponder it, and this is where the mystery and the miracle comes in—it still does nothing for you until you *put it into action*.

¹ John 8:32

² Mark 12:31 and Matthew 22:39

When you read a statement like *“Love thy neighbor as thyself,”* it doesn’t mean “Read this statement, *“Love thy neighbor as thyself.”* It means **love!** Love is an act. Love is never a word. You can’t love with words. You can only love with deeds. You can only love with acts of consciousness. Oh, they appear as words when you are forgiving, but then you’re not using the word “love” as a word when you’re forgiving. It is the **act** of forgiveness that does the work. If you say, “Love thy neighbor,” it does nothing to you until you empty out your closets of the clothes you have no longer need and send them out to the Salvation Army or somebody else that can use them. It is the **act** of loving thy neighbor, not the thinking the words, “Love thy neighbor” that does it.

You see, when we read that God is love, we are reading one of the most profound truths ever voiced. But you could repeat the statement “God is love” from now until the end of time and derive no benefit from it, because the statement “God is love”—well, it’s nothing. It’s a waste of time, actually. It is taking the statement “God is love” into consciousness and then **loving**. There has to be an **act** of love.

How can we love God? Well, here I have to deviate for a moment and say that probably a thousand different people can tell you a thousand different ways of loving God, and all of them are right. Nine hundred and ninety-nine of them I don’t know. My experience has only shown me one way to love God, and so that is the only way that I can pass on to our students. The only way I know of loving God is to love my fellow man. I have never, never discovered any other way of loving God. In proportion as I can express joy, gratitude, benevolence, justice, freedom, equality, cooperation, to my fellow man, I am, so far as I am concerned, expressing the only kind of love to God that I understand. I frankly do not say to you that this is the only way, because I honestly do not know. This is the only way that I know. To me, to say that I love God is a mockery unless in my conduct toward my fellow man I am trying to express the love to him that I would be expressing to God, if God were a person.

To me, this is the essence of the Master’s teaching in those two wonderful passages in which he says, *“I was in prison and ye visited me; I was sick and ye comforted me; I was an hungered and ye fed me. And they asked him, ‘Master, when were you in prison and we visited you? When were you sick and we healed you? When were you an hungered and we brought you food?’”* Of course, the Master wasn’t those things as a person, but *“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”*³

Therefore, the only way in which we can love the Christ, the Son of God, or God, would be in our service, devotion, benevolence to our fellow man. He goes on to say, *“I was in prison and ye did not visit me; I was sick and ye did not comfort me; I was an hungered and ye did not feed me; I was naked and ye did not clothe me.’ ‘When? When were you ever naked and we didn’t clothe you? When were you ever hungry and we didn’t bring you food?’”* Aha! Yes, of course. I’ll bet they did it to him. I’ll bet they were very attentive to the Master. But he says, *“Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me.”*⁴

And so it is that in this experience, I firmly believe that when we do not give forgiveness, justice, equity, benevolence, tolerance, freedom, equality to another, we are withholding it from the Christ, which is our true Self. Therefore in withholding it from another, in the end we withhold it from ourselves. How else could we interpret that? *“Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of*

³ See Matthew 25:35-40

⁴ See Matthew 25:42-45

these my brethren, ye did it not unto me,” because the only “me” there is, the only Christ there is, the only Son of God there is, is that which is made manifest as man on earth, or, if there are men on some other planets, we’ll include those too. At this moment we only know of the man on earth, and so we will say then that the only God there is, is the God that is made manifest as man. The only Christ there is, is the Christ that is made manifest as your individual life and mine. As we serve each other, we are serving the Christ of each other, and in the service to the Christ of you, I serve myself. In your service to the Christ of another, you are serving yourself.

(Excerpt from Recording #454, 1962 Mission Inn Closed Class, Side 2: “God’s Grace without Price or Reason.” This excerpt is posted with kind permission from the Estate of Joel Goldsmith, which holds the copy protection on all of Joel’s recorded classes and the copyright on the class transcripts. The full transcript of this recording is available at www.joelgoldsmith.com or by calling 1-800-922-3195.)