

Friday Focus

From Emory

Truth Needs no Cover

Recently, I was seated in the home of one my friends as we were preparing for our weekly book discussion and devotional time, and I noticed something funny about how my shirt fit. As I looked down, I realized why—my shirt was on inside out! It was 6:15 AM and I am sure that in the haste of my getting dressed early and in darkness, I had put on this pullover with seams and labels ‘blaring.’

Later in the day, I went by my wife’s office to give her something and I told her about what I had done, in the presence of two of her female co-workers. After I told my story one of them said: “I can’t believe you admitted that.” I wish I was really so transparent. For I instantly remembered that during that morning’s book study, without telling the other men in my group, I quickly placed my jacket back on (as if I had become chilled) to literally ‘cover-up’ my dressing mistake.

There have been numerous times in my life that I have done other things for which I was ashamed—some of which I covered-up for a period of time and some that have never been discovered (I hope) by the people who were deceived. In fact, I spent a few awkward moments at my most recent high school reunion apologizing to two individuals I had wronged more than 30 years ago. In reality, I could probably spend several weeks and thousands of dollars and never really make a dent in apologizing to all of those I have wronged over the years.

We are all like that. We are a guilt-driven culture. In fact, most issues involving psychological and emotional struggles are due to how we deal with it. Steve Brown has many quotes that I like, including: “*All emotional and mental illness is due to an inappropriate way of dealing with disappointment and fear.*” The more one’s personality has perfectionist tendencies, the more likely one is to work diligently to cover up any faults or failures that might indicate that they have weaknesses and failure in their life.

“There is no more arrogant man than the proud man trying to appear humble.” C.S. Lewis

You can’t fake it. You cannot pretend to live in the midst of mercy and grace and yet still hang on to the standards of being a people-pleaser and trying to control and dictate your will on circumstances and people.

So what is the ‘secret’ to restoration and recovery? What trait is there that is so attractive to our humanity that every human creature is automatically drawn to a person with this characteristic, so that even their flaws can be overlooked and forgiven?

It is transparency. And Jesus Christ was the most transparent man to ever walk the earth.

When we discover the truth of God’s love for us and the acceptance that we have in Christ, we are no longer held hostage to the guilt-prison that Satan uses to control our thought patterns and eventually our lives. We are free. And when we are truly free, our focus can then shift away from ourselves to others.

No one enjoys the ‘trap’ of being cornered and having nowhere to turn and no alternative but to trust God. But, I have personally found that the most powerful position in which I operate is when I am helpless and at my wits’ end. When I finally say to myself, “Well, if this costs me this job (or relationship, friendship, football game) then I know God must have a better plan for my life,” the results are often adventurous; but I can honestly say that God has always proven faithful, even though I may not understand or agree with His choice for circumstances.

*“Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live taking the form of readiness to die.”
G.K. Chesterton*

Now, I would like to make it appear that I always respond with boldness, courage, and transparency, but honesty compels me otherwise. Just ask my wife/family/players, etc. **I don’t.**

But I do think if we will listen to God's voice as He speaks to us through the words of other Godly people, or our children (and students), and His Word, His direction is often forthcoming. But the most difficult part of that is letting go and allowing God to be God.

A golfing analogy is that "you can't hit a golf ball and hang on to it at the same time." You've got to 'trust' your swing and your club decision. The same is true with life. That's why children don't come with a joystick controller like a video game.

Recently, I was dealing with a difficult decision. The ramifications of this situation were likely going to be embarrassing and difficult for a number of people. There would likely be anger, resentment, worry, and heartache as information was uncovered. As I was mentally working through the process I came across a message from one of the pastors that I listen to quite often. What divine providence that the message was heard on the very morning that I was dealing with this issue! His message to me was:

What man covers, God uncovers.

What man uncovers, God covers.

In other words, truth is always going to be revealed no matter how we might try to repress it. God is responsible for the result—**not me!** If we are faithful to unveil our sin, He is faithful to cover us with His Truth.

How does that apply to us at PCS? **Truth wins—always.** We do not have to carry the burden of trying to hide or pretend otherwise or to appear perfect by covering mistakes and sin that students, staff, parents, or we personally commit.

Teach truth, speak truth, live truth. In following Scripture, we have access to "true Truth." We need never to fear the result of living out the truth in any circumstance. (**Isaiah 41:9 & 10**)

An example of this is God's power going out through the robe of Jesus. In Luke 8, Jesus is surrounded very closely by a crowd of people when He said in verse 45, "Who touched me?" Among all of those surrounding Him, He felt the power of the Holy Spirit leave His body as a woman who had been sick for 12 years slipped up behind Him and simply touched His robe. Verse 48: "Then He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.'"

Until we seek Jesus, there is no truth. Healing is only found in trusting in Him solely for our needs. The 'good' of His created things are never enough to satisfy or overcome the sin in our lives. Only through Him can we find comfort and peace in the face of *our* affliction. (Tiger can spend years in that addiction clinic, but the answer is always going to be Jesus.)

Faith for those seeking truth in application says that:

-We don't have to chase down rumors.

-We don't have to fear telling a parent bad news.

-We don't have to fear following through with a discipline situation.

-We don't have to fear teaching subjects that are 'edgy.'

-We don't have to defend the name of Jesus.

-Our job is not to keep people from sinning.

-We don't have to try to prove who we are or that we measure up as a teacher, as an individual, or as a school.

You will be misunderstood. Your integrity and your judgment may sometimes be questioned, and you may sometimes feel attacked. In those times we must remind ourselves of the One that we say sits on the throne of our lives and we must trust Him.

God has a plan and it is perfect. What if we lived our lives the way that most of the apostles did in their latter years, which is to have little regard for our own needs/safety/desires and put the needs of others ahead of ourselves in trusting God for the result? *That* would make this the kind of school every parent would want for their child.