



Links Players

Exhausted, Will We Follow Jesus

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life' (John 8:12, NKJV).

Undeniable realization always comes, moments when vision is clear and unequivocal, when compensations and denials no longer supplant the truth, attempting to land permanence on the landscape of dreams.

Mine came on a putting green in college. Believing myself to be a fine putter, the glue holding the rest of my golf game together, I challenged my teammate to a putting match.

Several holes in and every hole lost, the match cast upon my belief one of those undeniable realizations. At least, the truth seeped through the underbelly of my confidence. Though it was an unconscious seeping through every subsequent proof I rejected, it laid the foundation, converting old dreams into new ones.

My denials lingered several years, easing my ego by means of a slow descent until I no longer misinterpreted the reality – I was not as good as I thought I was. Defeated by my teammate and a bothering truth, I drifted.

David Whyte, the American poet, says, “We stick to the wrong thing quite often, not because it will come to fruition by further effort, but because we cannot let go of the way we have decided to tell the story and we become further enmeshed even by trying to make sense of what entraps us, when what is needed is a simple, clean breaking away.”

What we see is immediate, validated through sight, touch, sound, taste, and smell, our world made present and real by perception and thought. Drifting becomes another way of sticking to the wrong thing, remaining in the immediate.

A drowning man believes he can save himself amid a rising sea by splashing and thrashing about while the deep, patient water takes its turn. Ignoring reality's iconoclastic purging delays our ability to see beyond the immediate.

But there is true north, a compass rose offering cardinal directions to find our way home again, away from the pull of our decided story. Underlining our misguided effort to fool ourselves again is a gathering exhaustion from our splashing and thrashing. There comes a time when we say to ourselves, “No more.”

And thus exhausted, our real calling begins, a clarity laid bare before God, toward history and purpose formed from our presence and experience, an intent ordained because we broke away from our decided story. True north is neither an immediate reality nor an A priori idea; rather, it is an honesty before self and God.

When we reach exhaustion and our vulnerability is exposed, when we know we have sinned and fallen short, will we follow Jesus?

When we break away, when we leave our perpetuated darkness, when our anxiety makes peace with death, and nothing shields us from God, even religion, especially religion, we are made ready to follow.

It's undeniable.

Prayer- Lord! Give us ears to hear.

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Deck Cheatham

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