

Straight Faith

In a recent movie, “The Straight Story,” the main character has a plan. An elderly man who has not spoken to his brother in over ten years finds out that he had two strokes. He has no drivers license or car, so he buys a used John Deer lawn mower, hooks up an old trailer, and drives almost 400 miles, camping out each night along the way. Along the way he meets people who try to talk him out of it, or drive him there. But, over a month later, he reunites with his brother, happily ever after. He drove straight from his house to his brother’s house.

God wants us to take the straight road to heaven. It leads us past sin and towards good. It is shorter, because it is straighter. And it is better, because it is the one on which He walks with us.

The long, winding road gives us many options which distract us. It leads to selfishness, as we take our focus off others. It sends us to detours and roads where the bridges are out. As we turn our hearts from our primary purpose, which is loving God and others, we find ourselves on that winding road.

Straight faith is that which keeps our eye towards heaven, knowing that everything we do can bless or help someone else. We can get distracted by politics and by ideals that we as humans want to be true. But when we consult God’s word, he is very clear about those things.

The world likes the grey areas. But God’s word is black and white. It describes the straight and winding roads very plainly. And He sends His son Jesus and the Holy Spirit to guide us along the way.

When the main character in “The Straight Story” is on the road, he is traveling so slowly that a hitch-hiker doesn’t even ask him for a ride. Later on the hitchhiker walks up to his camp and he is able to tell her that alone we can find difficulty, but together as family nothing can break us.

One of the most striking qualities is that in every conversation, he shoots straight. He never beats around the bush, just telling his simple story and dealing with the situations which happen as we are on the road.

John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, called people to this straight faith. He preached the words of Isaiah the prophet as he shouted “the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!” He upset the

status quo of organized religion to help the world get ready for the arrival of Jesus, who was to change everything.

Jesus was the same way. He told the truth, plain and simple, in a way that for the first time the world was able to appreciate God for who he was. He spoke in a way that cut through social constructs and man-made traditions, and led people to a better relationship with God and neighbor.

Paul the Apostle was never one to mince words. He spoke to a man who was trying to prevent a government official from becoming a Christian and said, “You master in every form of deception and recklessness, unscrupulousness, and wickedness, you son of the devil, you enemy of everything that is upright and good, will you never stop perverting and making crooked the straight paths of the Lord and plotting against His saving purposes?” Acts 13:10 Amplified Bible

Now that’s pretty straight talk! I’m not suggesting we speak that way all the time, but don’t you think it’s time for church and society to stop beating around the bush and travel straight and good paths together? Jesus calls us to freedom from possessions and worldly cares. He says that the kingdom of God is more important than work or family.

Political and ideological division is evident everywhere we turn. People do not respect the opinions and beliefs of others.

Even in the church we sometimes want our way rather than God’s way. Can you imagine hundreds of people seeking their own way? Utter chaos! It is God who calls us to his one way? God brings unity, love, blessing. That’s just who he is.

Jess Glynne writes, “I keep my head straight by having the right people around me, from my friends and family to my management and my team. They all keep me in my place. If I didn't have them supporting all the work that I do, I wouldn't be in such a solid place.”

Sounds a lot like the church to me. Travelling the straight road together is a much better way to do it. Common values. Unified purpose. Strength in number.

The story Alvin Straight told to the hitchhiker was this. “I'd give each one of 'em a stick and, one for each one of 'em, then I'd say, 'You break that.' Course they could real easy. Then I'd say, 'Tie them sticks in a bundle and try to break that.' Course they couldn't. Then I'd say, "That bundle... that's family.”

That’s straight talk. Which leads to straight faith. Which leads to a straight life.