

HEAVEN AND THE FUNNEL



By Tim Czapiewski

The great struggle between right and wrong in our lives can be compared to a lifelong journey through a gigantic funnel; One end is narrow and dark, while the other is bright, expansive, and continues on forever.

Your life and mine began somewhere the middle. The Creator gave us all the ability to choose the direction we wished to journey. Yet we became captivated by a desire which compelled us to venture towards the funnels narrow end. We were drawn to experience things we knew to be wrong. In the beginning, it was fun, exciting, and at times, empowering to practice evil. Like a man trapped in a funnel's spout, we lost the freedom to move comfortably. We thought that by venturing in further, things might eventually widen. But it was not the case. What was once thrilling and enjoyable degraded into disappointment and emptiness. Now these destructive habits remain an inseparable part of our lives.

Perhaps you thought you were the only one held captive. But this world is filled with people like yourself who have wholeheartedly pressed themselves into the narrow confinement of wrongdoing. Enslaved by their destructive habits and desires, many hearts cry out; **"Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Romans 7:24)?** Our consciences assure us that we are capable of doing better as a voice quietly asks, **"Would you like to be free?"**

A heavenly voice says; "Turn around and walk towards a new life!" Yes, God has given every man the ability to do this. Thousands have made this change in their lives and it has made all the difference. But in order to make such a change, you must be willing to turn around fully. **"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24).** The truth is; you cannot enjoy true happiness by living a good life one moment and an evil life then next. To be fully satisfied in this life, you must change direction.

You might say to yourself, "I need more time and more knowledge to consider whether or not this is possible." Friend, you must not hesitate to act on your conviction! Start at once to respond to that voice speaking to your heart and begin a life that enjoys doing what is right.

There once was a pool in the days of Jesus that was rumored to have supernatural powers. The superstition was this; if the pool's water began to stir, it meant that an angel was passing by and the first person into the pool would receive miraculous healing. Unfortunately, many who believed this were trampled to death trying to be first to enter.

Walking alone by this pool, Jesus drew near towards a homeless cripple laying alone. The man's strength was so far gone that he couldn't get into the water by himself. As the waters began to stir, he would cry out for someone to help. But all who had come to the water came only to help themselves. After years of failure, he laid in hopeless despair, knowing that his life was near to its close. Then a voice asked, **"Would you like to be made whole" (John 5:4)?** The Bible indicates that this crippled man knew nothing of the great works of Jesus as the Messiah. The man answered Jesus as a mere stranger answering, **"Sir..."**

Still holding firm to his belief in the local superstition, the cripple went on to say, **"I have no man...to put me into the water."** Notice that Jesus did not attack the beliefs of this ignorant man. He simply commanded, **"Rise, take up thy bed and walk...And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked" (John 5:8-9).** Overjoyed, the crippled man turned to thank the Divine stranger, but Jesus slipped into the crowd and disappeared.

Notice that in this brief conversation, that Jesus did not give the cripple a lecture about who He was and what His ultimate plan was for the world. It was not necessary for the cripple to know. Neither did the crippled man argue with Jesus. This lame man sensed in his heart that the stranger (Jesus) was saying something true and he should act on it.

Like the crippled man, your evil habits have halted your ability to live like you know you are capable. You are confined to a life of hopeless despair. Everything you have ever done to change your heart has failed. Not a single man on earth has ever given you the help you really needed. You must have faith! Do not let your lack intellectual knowledge about God hinder you from receiving the healing of the soul that faith Jesus can bring! **"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me (Psalms 51:10).**

Had the lame man stubbornly held to his belief that healing could only come from the pool, Jesus would have had to walk away. Thousands stood by the water that day, waiting for the magic moment of healing to arrive and they were all greatly disappointed. Will you, like that superstitious crowd, presume that there are other ways to receive healing for your soul? God stands before you this moment and patiently asks; **"Would you like to be made whole?"** The choice God gives you is simple; believe and walk towards a life of freedom or remain trapped in a life of unhappiness.



And what is the way to experience the healing of our unholy desires? **"This is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:4).** Once the lame man acted on what he knew to be true, new life came into his withered legs. He leapt to his feet and did what Jesus commanded. The lame

man's success depended upon his faith. **"God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).**

Faith is like a rocket booster, lifting its payload into the sky. These huge cylinders are filled with powerful fuel. Without it, a space crew and its vehicle would be remain grounded. So I ask; will you allow God to ignite your faith so you can experience an everlasting change of heart?

The most difficult time in the life of Christ was one that required the greatest faith. Everything around Jesus indicated that He had failed in His mission. Rejected by the religious leaders of the day, they sent Him to His death. The fickle crowds who once cheered and praised Him just days before, coldly turned against Him. And as these events transpired, His friends abandoned Him and then blended into the crowd. Even the sky around Jesus turned black, seeming to indicate that God had left Him.

His feelings of despair during His final moments were so overwhelming that He cried out, **"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Mark 15:34)?** His many enemies taunted Him, **"If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40).** Even Satan and the legions of Hell whispered their doubts into his mind, hoping that He would rise up from the cross and go back to His throne in heaven, leaving us behind forever.

But then, an unlikely believer spoke words of faith from an unlikely place. A thief, touched by Saviors unselfish life, turned completely from his evil ways, **"He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."** Then the weary voice that spoke faith to the crippled man months before, lifted His bruised head and confidently declared, **"Truly I say to you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).**

No matter what your standing is in life, no matter how far into the pit of wrongdoing you have fallen. Rise up! Jesus did not come and expend His life to see you fail. **"To them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).**

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