

## GOD'S REST OF THE STORY

(JOHN 1:16-18) 01/22/12

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

The Rest of the Story was a Monday-thru-Friday RADIO program originally hosted by PAUL HARVEY. It began as a part of his newscasts during the SECOND WORLD WAR & then premiered as its own series on the ABC RADIO NETWORKS on May 10, 1976. The Rest of the Story consisted of stories presented as little-known or forgotten facts on a variety of subjects with some key element of the story held back until the end. The broadcasts always concluded with a variation on the tag line "And now you know the rest of the story." FOR MORE THAN 70 YEARS IT WAS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE DAY FOR MILLIONS OF LISTENERS. A VOICE WOULD BOOM OUT OVER THE RADIO AIRWAVES, "HELLO, AMERICANS, THIS IS PAUL HARVEY! STAND BY FOR THE NEWS!"

IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, GOD ANNOUNCES THAT WE ARE TO STAND BY FOR SOME REALLY GOOD NEWS - GOD'S REST OF THE STORY! THERE WAS THE LAW OF MOSES - NOW THERE IS JESUS CHRIST. CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

IN JESUS IS GOD'S FULLNESS.

THIS IS NOT TO DISPARAGE THE LAW BUT TO EXPAND ON GOD'S PRESENCE & POWER IN THE WORLD. THE JEWISH RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WAS/IS ALL ABOUT THE LAW OF MOSES - LAWS, LAWS, LAWS - EVERYWHERE ARE LAWS. THERE ARE LAWS ABOUT SOMETHING & EVERYTHING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WITH VOLUMES OF INTERPRETATION & APPLICATION TO BOOT. EVERY LITTLE DETAIL & OBLIGATION OF LIFE HAD SOME LAW PERTAINING TO IT. DROWNING IN A SEA OF LAWS LIKE STRAPPED IN STRAIGHT JACKETS. THE FULLNESS OF GOD IS NOT REVEALED & MADE KNOWN BY THE LAW. RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS NOT MADE INTIMATE & VITAL BY THE LAW. THE LAW INFLECTS PAIN, JUDGMENT & CONDEMNATION - IT REFLECTS LIMITEDNESS NOT FULLNESS. NO ONE CAN SURVIVE OR THRIVE UNDER THE BURDEN OF LAW. IT INFLECTS A RELATIONSHIP WITH FEAR & BROKENNESS. THE LAW WAS NEVER MEANT TO REVEAL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. IT IS CONSTRICTING & CONSTRAINING - GOOD FOR SAFETY & DIRECTION, PERHAPS, BUT NOT FOR FULLNESS - THERE WAS MORE TO COME & JESUS IS THE REST OF, THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S REVELATION, THE REST OF THE STORY.

THE APOSTLE JOHN MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE FULLNESS OF JESUS IS NOT A CHANGE OF GOD'S MIND & BEING - JESUS WAS IN THE BEGINNING, WAS GOD, IS THE WAY, MIND, FULLNESS OF GOD - GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN LIKE JESUS, VSS. 1, 2, 3. THE LAW WAS IMPERFECT, INCOMPLETE, NOT THE FULLNESS OF GOD - JESUS CHRIST IS THAT FULLNESS! THE ONLY WAY TO GET THINGS RIGHT WITH GOD IS WITH JESUS.

IN THE DAWNING OF ANY NEW DAY, THE HORIZON MIGHT APPEAR HAZY & NOT CLEAR UNTIL THE FULLNESS OF THE SUN BREAKS THRU THE CLOUDS TO SHINE BRIGHTLY & FULLY. NOW AT LAST ALL THINGS ARE CLEAR & CERTAIN - MADE FULL BY THE LIGHT OF JESUS.

HOW EMPTY, INCOMPLETE & NOT SATISFYING IS ANY RELATIONSHIP BASED ON LAWS, RULES & REGULATIONS. THERE IS A KNOWLEDGE THAT LEGALISM IS NOT QUIET RIGHT & JUST WAIT UNTIL I CAN GET OUT OF HERE TO BREATHE, GROW, BECOME FULL IN THE ABUNDANCE, FULLNESS OF GRACE UPON GRACE. JESUS IS INEXHAUSTIBLE. GO TO JESUS WITH ANY NEED & JESUS IS MORE THAN SUFFICIENT.

JESUS IS NOT MORE OF THE SAME LAW BUT SOMETHING NEW & DIFFERENT - GRACE UPON GRACE. AS THE FULLNESS OF GOD, JESUS COMES AS A LIFE GIVING BREATH OF FRESH AIR - THE DAWNING OF A NEW DAY & AGE. GRACE UPON GRACE IS TO SAY THAT WE CAN NEVER, EVER EXHAUST THE GRACE OF GOD - SUPER ABUNDANT. HOW MUCH GRACE? AS MUCH AS WE MIGHT POSSIBLY EVER NEED. A WELL

SPRING OF FRESH WATER THAT NEVER RUNS DRY - THAT IS ALWAYS FLOWING, PURE & ABUNDANT - TO SATISFY OUR EVERY NEED & DESIRING OF GOD!

WE TEND TO BE LEGALISTIC IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S GRACE - YES WE ARE! THRU OUR JUDGMENTAL, LEGALISTIC EYES & POSTURING WE CREATE HUGE LAKES & OCEANS OF PEOPLE, CIRCUMSTANCES & CONDITIONS FROM WHICH WE WOULD WITH-HOLD GRACE - IF WE WERE GOD - BUT WE ARE NOT GOD. GOD'S GRACE IS SUFFICIENT & ABUNDANT FOR ALL SINNERS NO MATTER HOW HUMONGOUS & REPETITIVE THEIR SIN - WE TEND TO BE SELECTIVE & EXCLUSIVE IN THE APPLICATION OF GRACE - GOD IS NOT! GOD GOES TO GREAT EXTREME TO SHOW US THAT - EVEN TO THE CROSS.

WE RECEIVE GRACE UPON GRACE FROM GOD'S FULLNESS AS REVEALED & SHOWN TO US IN JESUS. MANY OF US IN MOMENTS OF SELF HONESTY MIGHT SUGGEST, WELL, WE SIMPLY CANNOT, MUST NOT EVER ATTEMPT TO RUN OUR WORLD BASED ON SUCH FULL-NESS OF GRACE. SOUNDS TOO SOFT & IDEALISTIC, HUMPH! REALLY? HOW SERIOUS, INDEED DO YOU THINK GOD WAS/IS IN SENDING HIS SON JESUS TO REVEAL JUST THE OPPOSITE THAT YES WE CAN, YES WE MUST, YES TO JESUS, WE MUST LIVE THAT WAY! JESUS IS NOT THE EXCEPTION TO HOW WE ARE TO LIVE OUR LIVES - JESUS IS THE FULLNESS, GRACE UPON GRACE, AS TO HOW WE ARE TO LIVE OUR LIVES.

ALL YOU OBSESSIVE - PERFECTIONIST - COMPULSIVE TYPES OUT THERE (LIKE ME) MIGHT THROW OUR HANDS UP IN OBJECTION & PANIC BUT KNOW YOU THIS - THAT IS JESUS - THAT IS GOD - THAT IS THE WAY WE ARE MEANT & CREATED TO BE - GRACE UPON GRACE.

MACK IN THE BOOK THE SHACK WAS HARD PRESSED TO GROW & CHANGE IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S GRACE - THAT GOD'S GRACE & THEREBY MACK'S GRACE APPLIED TO EVEN THE HORRIBLE MAN WHO TORTURED & KILLED HIS YOUNG DAUGHTER. IT COMES AS AN AFFRONT TO OUR ECONOMY OF JUSTICE TO CONSIDER THAT GOD'S GRACE APPLIES TO THE ASSAILANT AS WELL AS TO THE ASSAILED. WHY THAT IS ALMOST UNTHINKABLE - BUT THAT IS THE FULLNESS OF GRACE UPON GRACE. WHEN WE REALLY GET A GLIMPSE OF HOW EXTREME GOD'S GRACE IS - WHY, WE MIGHT ALMOST WANT TO CRUCIFY HIM TOO. GOD FORGIVE & SAVE OUR HEARTS OF SHAME & CONDEMNATION!

THEN APOSTLE JOHN STARTLES US WITH AN OBVIOUS TRUISM THAT ALL WOULD AGREE WITH - SO OBVIOUS - WHY STATE IT, "NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN GOD." GREEK & JEW, ANCIENT, MODERN & POST MODERN PEOPLE WOULD ALL AGREE, "NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN GOD." BUT THEN HE FORE-SHADOWED PAUL HARVEY WITH THE REST OF THE STORY. JESUS CHRIST HAS MADE HIM KNOWN, HAS FULLY REVEALED TO US WHAT GOD IS LIKE - WHAT GOD LOOKS LIKE - WANT TO SEE GOD - LOOK TO JESUS!!! JESUS IS GOD IN MIND, CHARACTER & BEING IN HUMAN FLESH. POINT BEING, GOD IS TO NEVER, EVER BE A STRANGER TO US AGAIN - NO LONGER A MYSTERY. JESUS IS NO LONGER THE LOGOS - THE WORD WITH GOD - JESUS IS NOW THE INCARNATE GOD - GOD IN THE FLESH. HOW IN THE WORLD - UNDER HEAVEN & EARTH - CAN WE EVER GET THAT WRONG AGAIN? THE STATEMENT NOW BECOMES, "EVERYONE THRU THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH JESUS HAS NOW SEEN GOD." WE NOW KNOW WHAT GOD LOOKS LIKE!

JESUS TAKES ALL THE GUESS WORK OUT OF OUR FAITH - TO KNOW JESUS IS TO KNOW GOD - TO BE KNOWN BY JESUS IS TO BE KNOWN BY GOD. IT IS ALL ONE IN THE SAME! AND THAT MY FRIENDS IN CHRIST JESUS, IS GOD'S REST OF THE STORY....