

Ordinary 4B - 2024

Astonishing!

For centuries people believed that Aristotle was right when he said that the heavier an object, the faster it would fall to earth. Aristotle was regarded as the greatest thinker of all time, and surely he would not be wrong. Anyone, of course, could have taken two objects, one heavy and one light, and dropped them from a great height to see whether or not the heavier object landed first. But no one did until nearly 2,000 years after Aristotle's death. Legend has it that in 1589 Galileo summoned learned professors to the base of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Then he went to the top and pushed off a ten-pound and a one-pound weight. Both landed at the same instant. The power of belief was so strong, however, that the professors denied their eyesight. They continued to say Aristotle was right.

I believe that this illustrates perfectly what is going on in the world today. You could show the terrible ravaging effects of AIDS and STD's and people will have promiscuous sex anyway. You can show someone a diseased liver and cancerous lungs and people are going to abuse alcohol and smoke regardless of the facts.

You know what I wish? I wish someone would just climb to the top of the tower and push off a ten-pound argument and a one-pound argument and let's just see if they reach the ground first. That would finally prove who is right and who is wrong. But then I am reminded that when Galileo did that no one believed him. Even with the authority of obvious visible proof, i.e. the two weights reached the ground at the same time, the professors did not believe. The problem here is obvious. **Most people are going to believe what they have always believed regardless of the facts.**

But something different occurred in the life of Jesus. Something persuasive. Mark records that when Jesus came to Capernaum, on the Sabbath day, and entered the synagogue and taught, the crowds were astounded. Why? One word: Authority. He taught, not as the scribes taught, but as one having authority.

What was it that convinced them? What did they hear and see in the life of Christ that made him stand above all other teachers. Why were they so drawn to him?

Help in Facing Our Fears

Leslie Weatherhead once told a parable of a little boy who fled from a witch who had turned herself into a cat. As the boy ran, he kept glancing fearfully over his shoulder. The first time he looked back, the cat was the size of a calf. The next time he looked, it had grown to the dimensions of an elephant. Then the boy fell, and was unable to go farther. Resolutely he got up and faced the pursuing horror. It stopped. So he took a step toward it. It backed away. As he continued to advance toward it, it began to shrink in size as it retreated from him. Finally, it changed into a mouse and ran under the door of the witch's cottage to be seen no more.

The moral is clear: it pays to face up to your fears. But sometimes that is hard to do. That is when we need to turn to Christ. He can help us stand up to our fears and conquer them. He can cast out demons. (Adapted from Leslie Weatherhead)

The Authority of Jesus

The church in the world is a lot like the story that E. Stanley Jones tells of the missionary in the jungle. He got lost with nothing around him but bush and a few cleared places. He finally found a small village and asked one of the natives if he could lead him out of the jungle. The native said he could.

"All right," the missionary said, "Show me the way." They walked for hours through dense brush hacking their way through unmarked jungle. The missionary began to worry and said, "Are you quite sure this is the way? Where is the path?" The native said, "Bwana, in this place there is no path. I am the path."

Our path out of the jungle of this world is God in Christ. We may have some Rabbis, Masters, Father's, Teachers, and Reverends but we are all like the missionary. We rely not upon men but Christ who is our path.

(by Brett Blair at www.eSermons.com)

The Dance

C.S. Lewis once penned some thoughts on worship, particularly in the face of liturgical innovators in England who seemed to think that every worship service needed to be a kind of variety show with each week being different from the week prior. Lewis had no truck with that kind of thinking. Worship, Lewis wrote, should be a bit like dancing. Once you have learned how to dance and have become good at it, you are able to immerse yourself in the dance and just do it almost without thinking about it. But if you must constantly look down at your feet, if you have to think about each movement before you actually make it, then you can't dance yet but are just learning how to dance.

Worship is like that, Lewis thought. A believer should be able to move through the liturgy without having to check his every movement first. An ideal service would be one you hardly notice in the sense of your simply being immersed and caught up in a set of actions and a series of thoughts that are fully a part of you already. Overall, Lewis makes a good point. Still, I would throw in a cautionary note to his analogy: worship may be like a dance that you are so good at you can just do it freely and flowingly, but we dare never forget who our dance partner is!

(by Scott Hoezee from [Epiphany 4](#))