

Come to the Knowledge of the Truth
1 Timothy 2:1-7

Ogden Nash wrote:

**There's only one way to achieve happiness on this terrestrial ball,
And that is to have either a clear conscience or none at all.**

And there is but one way to have a clear conscience – to be forgiven by Christ and reconciled to God.

You can pretend to have a clear conscience,
but too many memories of things you have said or thought,
things you have planned,
things you have done
get in the way.

And you wouldn't want to live in a world where people had no conscience.

You wouldn't want to live with yourself if you had no conscience.

To achieve the clear conscience that will lead to happiness on this terrestrial ball,
you need to clear it, wipe it clean. And you can't.

But you can confess every sin that clutters you conscience,

give it all to Jesus, and let Him forgive you,

wash it clean,

and you will be able to stand before God,

forgiven,

clear of conscience,

blessed and forgiven.

Our epistle lesson for today includes one of the most significant passages in all of the New Testament. *God our Savior wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.*

It declares first of all that there is one God. This is the primary affirmation in the OT, in opposition to the many polytheisms of that day. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one.” Monotheism is the basic premise of both Judaism and Christianity.

But then comes a difference. For Christianity goes on to assert **that there is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ.**

The Greek word for ‘mediator’ means “one who stands between,” and it occurs only once in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Job was frustrated by the

fact that God was not a man with whom he could converse. In despair he concludes,
“Neither is there any mediator between us, that he might lay his hand on us both.”

Christ is the answer to this ancient cry for help.

Jesus stands between God the Father and you, one hand on each of you,

and He will not let go.

He is there to bridge the gap.

He is there to bring you together.

He is there to reconcile you to the Father.

God the Father will not pull away from Jesus, His Son, for His Son is doing exactly what He wants Him to do, what He sent Him to do.

We can twist out of His grasp, away from Him and our Father in heaven,

but He will never push us away,

and He will never let go.

When we do rebel,

when we sin,

even when we offend Him,

He will not give up or drop the hand that still reaches out to us.

Even if we mock Him, scream at Him, or strike Him, He will stand His ground.

It's nothing He hasn't seen;

in fact, it's nothing He hasn't heard or felt.

Sinners have done worse to Him before.

He holds out His hand, reaching to us, and calls our name, beckoning us back to reconciliation with the Father.

He stands between us, bridging the gap. To be of any use, a bridge across a chasm or river must be anchored on both sides.

With one foot planted in eternity, Christ planted the other in time.

He who was the eternal Son of God became the Son of Man.

Two beginnings, two natures:

begotten of the Father from all eternity,

born of the Virgin Mary. True God, True man.

Christ has closed the gap between deity and humanity, between heaven and earth, between time and eternity.

He bridged the chasm that separated us from God, by God's design and command. For *God our Savior wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.*

Like Paul, we who have been saved and have come to the knowledge of the truth have been commissioned as heralds of this truth –

a truth so vital I stake my soul on it,
so essential the people you share it with will die if they don't hear it,
word from a king who will not be trifled with to subjects he can't
wait to tell,
truth so trustworthy that the Bible is full of it,
so sacred that God stakes His name on it,
so precious the greatest price has been paid to secure it,
so wide sweeping that there is not a person on earth for
whom it is not appropriate, nor has there ever been.

The fact that God tells us that saving faith is a matter not only of feelings but of knowledge is comforting to those of us in a spiritual tradition that began in a call to an academic debate on a university campus.

Lutheranism was founded by a professor with two earned doctorates who had studied both the practice of the Church and the Scriptures they confessed and had the audacity to insist they ought to have something to do with one another, and has concerned with education in the ways of God ever since. We deeply desire the Truth of God revealed in Scripture, to satisfy our every doubt, to answer every challenge, to comfort every troubled heart, and to find out all we can about the God who loves us so fiercely He will not let us go.

In fact, Jonathon Rudman, a Lutheran musician in Minnesota, has included a song on the intellectual content of faith on his CD *Sound Theology*, which was named best Christian Rock Album of the Year for 2003. He calls the song, "I Love You with All of My Mind." I wanted to play it for you. But it proved to be too much for the people I played it for last night, so I'll just recite the lyrics. You might want to image a guitar progression and a bass structure much like that of the 1972 T. Rex song, "Bang a Gong." Or perhaps you might not.

"I Love You with All of My Mind"

lyrics and music by Jonathon Rudman, © 2002, Salt Lady Records

Old "heart and soul" - they're so over-rated.
They only do two-thirds of the work that needs done.
Yeah, I want to love You,
And love You completely,
And use all of my senses and beautiful reason.

I love You with all of my mind.

I love You with all of my mind.
I've wondered and studied and I've come to find
I love You with all of my mind.

Some people say I'm too calculating –
That I bury my feelings and my heart's gone cold.
But I've seen emotions that change like the weather,
So I don't just want to feel – I want to know.

I love You with all of my mind.
I love You with all of my mind.
I've wondered and studied and I've come to find
I love You (*Jesus*) with all of my mind.

God our Savior desires all **to be saved** and to come to the **knowledge** of the Truth. To that end, He calls you to live peaceable lives before everybody. Pray for everyone. Like a herald of God, share the good news of a Savior who has one hand on the Father and one hand on you, and will not let you go. For *God our Savior wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

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