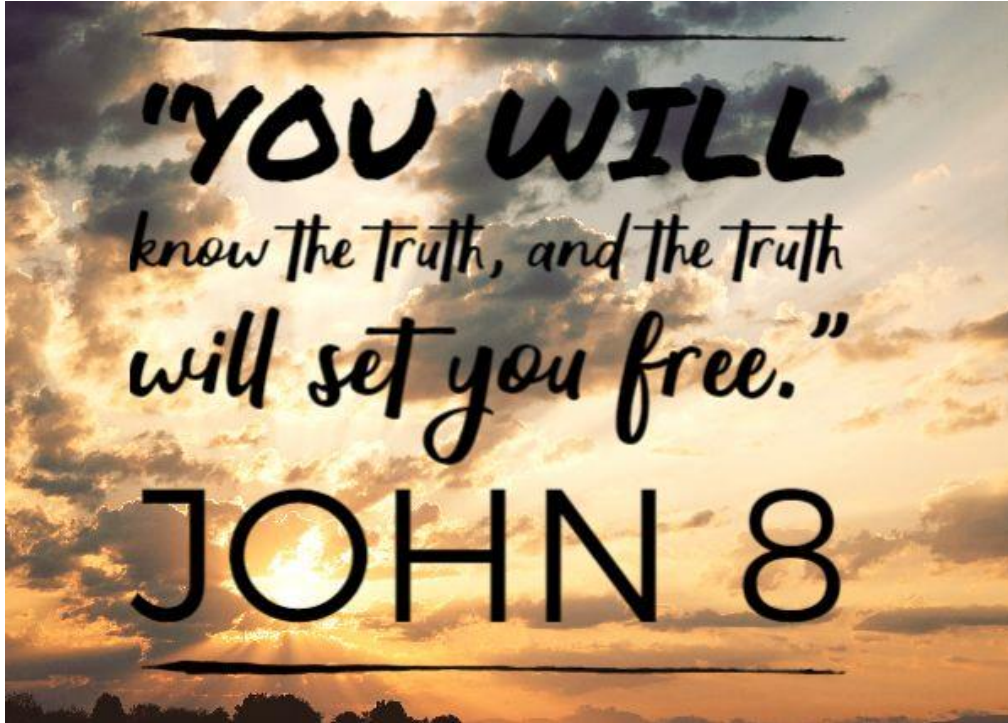


HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 2-26-2021



Dear Friends in Christ,

Many years ago, my brother Joel and I developed a practice that served us well from that time on. I would go so far as to say that this practice really became a guiding principle—something that is central to who we are and how we go about doing things. It saved us from conflict and provided us a freedom to acknowledge when we were wrong. Very simply, this principle is “seek the truth.”

Joel was my best friend. He died in 2014 after ten years of living with lung cancer. When he was first diagnosed in 2004, he was given a 5% chance of living two years. Clearly, he bumped the curve. Joel and I loved to talk about all kinds of things and sometimes we would disagree about certain facts: the lyrics to songs, the actors in movies, the source of quotes, results of scientific studies, and so on. We could have spent long periods of time arguing, trying to prove that our position was right, and perhaps losing patience with each other. That was not how we wanted to spend our time and energy. Instead, we choose to simply say to each other, “Seek the truth.” Then on our own, we would research to find the facts about whatever we had been discussing.

Finding the truth was not about proving who was right and who was wrong. It could have been, but we also chose to make truth the ultimate goal—even above “winning.” When one of us found the answer to our debate, he would call the other to share what had been discovered. Even if it meant admitting that what the one calling had thought to be true was incorrect. But that was okay because, again, the goal was not to be right, but to seek the truth. We had learned with certainty a fact and that was the victory we sought.

In John 8, Jesus says, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Joel and I found this to very much be the case. By focusing on the truth and not on winning and losing, we found the freedom to actively pursue facts. We could appreciate the effort of the other to find that information. And both of us would rejoice, if you will, that we had found a truth.

The world encourages us to “never admit that you’re wrong.” I think that is the wrong focus and actually can contribute to division and conflict. We hear regularly of those who claim to be right, and thereby believe they are superior, without taking the time to really find out if the information being cited is correct. If those facts are shown to be incorrect, the response is often defensiveness or ongoing denial. If, however, the goal was to seek the truth, then we might more often hear responses of appreciation for that accurate information, and perhaps even an apology for the previous misinformation. Of course, one problem is that there are many sources for information and too often those sources conflict with each other. Still, it might be a tremendous blessing to our society if the truth became the ultimate goal and that all of us could adopt that simple but important practice to seek the truth.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jeffrey