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Misinformation!

Misinformation! – a word that is often in the news these days. At the moment there are people who are determined that if a vaccine is developed to counter Covid-19, they will not have it anywhere near them for fear of damaging their health! But a vaccine is designed to promote healing from disease. So why is this?

It goes back to Dr Andrew Wakefield claiming that the MMR vaccine could lead to autism in children. Although this has been discredited and the doctor has been ‘struck off’ there are still many people who believe it (social media strikes again!). As a result there are illnesses like measles and mumps that are making a comeback despite virtually being wiped out over the years by vaccination.

Many people seem to want to believe what people such as celebrities say rather than experts.

But Misinformation is not a new phenomenon – it was rife in the early Church. In fact St Paul wrote in Colossians 2: 8 – 10 ‘Don’t let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies, their wrong and shallow answers built on men’s thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said. For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; *so you have everything when you have Christ*, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power.’

He was needing to confront a heresy similar to Gnosticism that was particularly popular in the second century which claimed that there was important knowledge hidden from most believers; that the body was evil; that Jesus appeared to be human but was not. Clearly the misinformation from Paul’s time had not gone away.

Paul countered it by explaining that in Christ we see all we need to see of God’s provision for us. God dwelt in the body of Jesus Christ, so how can the body be evil? Jesus is fully human and fully God. We don’t need anything else.

You would be entitled to know why I believe this. It is very simple, through my life so far (all 71 years of it) I can see how God has worked in my life to make certain I know what He wants me to know and am where He wants me to be doing what He wants me to do.

In my late teens I struggled to make sense of exactly what Jesus had done for me by dying on the Cross. I had grown up in the Methodist Church and knew what He had done, but why? During my time

at college in Swansea, a friend invited me to a Baptismal Service at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. During the singing of the hymn recorded below the minister invited those who wanted to know more to go down and shake his hand. No way was I doing that. God took a hand in the matter literally and physically hauled me past my friends despite Satan tugging back – yes it really was very physical. When I took the minister’s hand I suddenly knew that Christ had died for me personally – no one else just me – but of course He also died for everybody else as well.

St. Augustine once said, ‘God loves each of us as if there were only one of us to love’.

About 100 years ago an investigative journalist and a sceptic of Christianity called Frank Morrison decided to discredit Christianity once and for all. So he delved into the Gospels and as many contemporary resources as he could and ended up writing a book called ‘Who Moved the Stone?’. By that time he was a convinced Christian. I can recommend the book to anyone who wants to find out more!

The ex-slave trader John Newton (writer of ‘Amazing Grace’) on hearing of a particularly rebellious person who had become a Christian commented, ‘If God can save me He can save anyone’.

In his writings Paul referred to himself as the worst of sinners as he started off persecuting the members of the Early Church until God confronted him on the Damascus Road and transformed him – you can read about it in Acts 9: 1 – 19a.

There have always been people who want to challenge Christianity. Thus far they have failed. Ignore misinformation about Jesus and concentrate on the truth of the Gospels – if you are not already a Christian, it could transform you!

Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt;
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive;
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown
has broken every barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,
here for a season, then above:
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Many Christian Blessings - Roger

