

S A M P L E

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME
TO REVIEW THIS SAMPLE OF BOOK 2 IN THE SERIES.

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Truly , I Tell You Book 2
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Library of Congress Control Number: 2019903586
WestBow Press rev. date: 05/21/2020

How To Use This Study

When I started this examination of “Truly, I tell you” I found approximately eighty times this phrase, spoken by Jesus, was recorded in the Bible. I have combined the details of each statement from the four gospels and summarized them into forty “Truly Chapters” (4 volumes of 10 chapters each, released in 2 books).

To assist us in learning these words each “Truly Chapter” has a section called “Sink Into Your Ears” with questions that may help you explore the deeper meaning of the scripture for personal devotionals; or they can be used for small group studies.

Also, each “Truly Chapter” has a section called, “My Umbrella”. This is a place you can journal your own personal experiences of how the “truly” words Jesus has given challenged you, enlightened you, and deepened your faith.

Finally, I encourage you to read these scriptures in various versions. You may never know which style will personally speak to you or which word God will use to speak to you. But “truly I tell you”, when you seek Him, He is faithful to respond. And like any good parent, you never know what God the Father may have hidden in your bags!

It Rains—Take The Umbrella!

Introduction by Cindy Rowe

tru·ly [troo-lee] *adverb*

- in accordance with fact or truth; truthfully.
- exactly; accurately; correctly.
- rightly; properly; duly.
- legitimately; by right.
- really; genuinely; authentically.

Looking at the above definitions of “truly” I am drawn into the depth of right-ness. Then I wondered—why is it a surprise to me that Jesus would use this word? Why am I surprised that Jesus would speak such absolute truth when He had said, *“I am The Way, The Truth, and The Life...”* (John 14:6) The fact that the person who actually is “The Truth” is speaking to us is a very compelling reason to stop and take note of His words, but the fact that there are times when He speaks these words and adds the word “truly” to His statement is particularly noteworthy. Sometimes He even says “very truly”.

Basically, by definition, being “The Truth” we could say He is incapable of speaking anything that is incorrect or false. Being “The Way” and “The Life” means He could never lead us astray or betray us. By using the word truly before His statements it is understood that what He is about to say does not diverge from the rule or standard and cannot be inaccurate. If that wasn’t enough to get our attention, in John chapter 1 we are told Jesus is “The Word”. That’s a pretty firm standing.

So, to summarize: The Word, The Way, The Truth, and The Life has spoken some very truly statements. What is our response? According to 2nd Timothy 3:14-15 we are to live what we have learned. *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy*

you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” If we are to be “Christ-like” and wise in our faith we should then, at the very least, heed His advice.

Speaking of heeding advice.... Have you ever had someone give you instruction or advice but you didn’t really understand it until later? While packing to leave for college in San Francisco my daughter Melissa had this experience in our long and heated discussion about an umbrella. She insisted she didn’t need to pack her umbrella and would never use it. I insisted she would. She did not pack the umbrella. Happy she’d won this battle she went off to college. As she drove away to her college dorm my husband asked me how I was holding up, knowing she’d left the umbrella. He, of course, had been witness to the hours of tears and gnashing of teeth as she and I battled the night before about that stupid umbrella. I smiled and told him I had done what any good parent would do; I’d hidden the umbrella in her bags.

A couple of months later, it happened. Melissa called.

“Hi Mom. Just called to say hi and tell you it’s raining today in San Francisco,” she stated reluctantly.

“Oh Really?” I asked, trying not to giggle.

“Yes, and do you know what? I’m dry thanks to my umbrella.” She said confidently. “I’m glad you hid it in my bags. I really did need it today. I’m sorry I gave you such a hard time.”

Ah, the fruit of a Mother’s worry and tears, toiling over the words spoken to those deaf ears now birthed into life—at just the right time. Yes, a mother’s joy. But also a Savior’s joy?

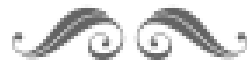
The disciples were there when the “Truly” words were actually spoken by Jesus. Have you thought if you were there when Jesus spoke it

would be easier to listen and follow His words? Maybe not; Luke 9:43-45 records for us that the disciples didn't understand what they had heard at the time and, in fact, God hid the meanings from them until the right time for the words to be used and make sense. *"And they were all astonished at the majesty of God. But while all were marveling at all the things which He did, He said unto His disciples, 'Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men.' But they understood not, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying."*

Speaking in this same manner, I could have said to my daughter, "**Truly, I tell you**, the rain will come and you will be in need of a dry place to stand. Do not leave it behind, but take this umbrella and be well". I don't think I spoke that poetically. It probably sounded something like "Your little hoodie will not keep you dry, so don't be so stubborn. We're talking about San Francisco, not sunny Southern California. It rains—take the umbrella!!" Like Melissa and the disciples, we are told to "Let these words sink into our ears". And while we may not understand at the time, soon the day will come for truth to "rain".

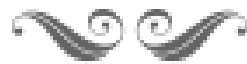
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Volume 3

Faith and Service



TRULY 21

Home Town Hero



"Truly, I tell you," He continued, "No prophet is accepted in his hometown." Luke 4:24

Although this is the only verse spoken as a "truly" verse in Luke 4:24, the story is also documented in Matthew 13 and Mark 6.

"And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household'." Matthew 13:57

"Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household'." Mark 6:4

These verses benefit us best by reading each of the three gospel accounts found in Matthew 13, Mark 6, and Luke 4 then reading the verses in different versions. I am using a parallel Bible that includes New International Version, Revised Standard, The Living Bible, and King James. I also frequently pop over to Biblegateway.com to read the other versions they offer. Whether you do it old school style, with a Bible on your lap, or use a smart phone app - I urge you to look up the scriptures in various resources to get a broader perspective and interpretation.

Many years ago, there was a cartoon show with a superhero and when he took flight he sang this little song, "Here I come to save the day!" His name was Might Mouse. When we are called by God to say or do something that will right a wrong, we can certainly feel like we have been given super powers and have been asked to swoop in to save the day. The truth is, God is the real super hero and we are His helpers.

I'm writing this Chapter during Easter season and when pondering these study verses, I thought, when Jesus went home it would have been the perfect time for his community to greet him with palm branches and a parade. You know, "local boy made good" and big thanks to the "hero" or Messiah. This was not the case. As I re-read these verses in my parallel Bible, I found the people of Jesus' hometown were indeed "amazed" and "wondered" at His words; even "spoke well of Him". But something had changed. It is intriguing how this change in attitude is captured in the Living Bible version,

"...How can this be? Isn't this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:22).

Wait a minute... What does that have to do with anything? Can't a person break free of a family reputation? Can't a person outgrow their own childhood status? Can't a person rebuild their character and leave the past in the past? Yes, a person can but, it's just often harder for the people who knew that person previously to accept the change. The person in this story is Jesus, and I doubt he had a childhood like the TV character "Dennis the Menace." In fact, there are stories in the gospels about Jesus teaching in the temple as a child. We don't know much about the reputation of his siblings. We do know his father was a carpenter and this profession was not held in high esteem in His era or in the region. Family namesake and ancestry was passed on and scrutinized for many generations in the Middle East. This is true still today, although the evaluation of a person based on family history is slowly fading in some westernized nations. This is often referred as the "caste" system (pronounced kast defined as a rigid system of social distinctions) However, for Jesus, this discrimination took center stage as He began His ministry.

TRULY, I TELL YOU

In Luke 4:24-27 Jesus reminds His followers there were other prophets that faced the same type of challenges in their own hometowns. This tells me that we are also not alone when this attitude from others plagues our own ministry or Christian maturity.

How did Jesus face this obstacle? He left. Yep, in Luke 4:28-30, we see that the people were furious with Him and drove Him out of the town. They were furious because Jesus had just stated that no one in this his home town would be healed or see miracles. (Verse 23) Why? Because even though the people were amazed at His teachings, they had already begun to question His position and authority by saying, "Isn't this Joseph's son?". Jesus had actually spoke of this just leave" way of dealing with this issue when He sent out some of His disciples for a ministry trip. Matthew 10: 14 reads, *"If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet."* Yes, Jesus was the first to say, "Shake it off" not Taylor Swift...

If God wants us to stay and work through the issues, then we should stay; however, if He wants us to leave, then we should leave. We don't see the big picture, so we must trust God to direct our purpose and actions. In this case, the people lacked faith, so Jesus did not waste his time trying to convince them.

For me, I know there have been many times God wanted me to stay so He could teach me, but other times when I stayed the lesson was for the people. In some instances, He removed me from the situation. Unfortunately, in every circumstance I struggled with feeling personally rejected which took its toll on my heart. I liken my feelings to kids of divorce who are told they didn't do anything wrong and that the divorce was not about them. That may be true, but in the moment - it doesn't feel true. Feelings can deceive us but if we hold on to what God says, we can "truly" know what to do and stay or go.

In Matthew 13:58 the story tells us Jesus did not perform miracles there because of their lack of faith. In other "Truly" Chapters we have learned that Jesus never did anything that He wasn't led by

the Father to do or say. This method of action is important for us to tap into as well. In Jesus' circumstance, the townspeople lacked faith and outright drove Him away, so Jesus was led by the Father to leave.

We can only imagine what Jesus felt as His friends, relatives and His childhood community rejected Him. Noted in Matthew 21:42, Jesus replied to them by quoting scripture found in the Jewish Old Testament and Psalm 118:22,23:

"Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.' "

As I read this verse and apply it to my own life, I realize what God tells me to bring to people may not be accepted. When this happens, they are saying no to God, not no to me. Even if they struggle with accepting what I speak because of my past or my family history, I can't control what they do with what is brought to them by God through me. I can only be obedient to God and let Him do the rest.

We may think because we have grown up a bit and are now following God's direction we should be revered as a hometown hero, but some people don't recognize God's work in our lives. They are blinded by their own biases and can't hear God speaking through us. God will forgive and forget, but people often don't; which can cloud their judgement.

I am not the Savior of humanity like Jesus, but I have set my purpose to be used as a "living stone" as God sees fit. We are also told living stones like the Cornerstone will be rejected by men. 1 Peter 2:2-9 it reads:

*"As you come to Him, the Cornerstone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to Him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering **spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... It is said, 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,' (quoting Psalm 118:22,23)*

TRULY, I TELL YOU

And, 'A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.' (Quoting Isaiah 8:14) They stumble because they disobey the message. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."

Living stones are like river rocks; moved, rubbed, washed, and polished at all stages along the journey. In my experience those words are a bit too poetic when describing the actual process of making a river rock into a living stone. So, let me re-phrase... The rocks are pounded, hurled, and smacked against other rocks, until the rough edges are eroded away. Spiritual sacrifice is the process at work and the release of ourselves to God for His purposes is our offering. (See Romans 12:1-2) Expect some hurts and bruising. These stones are living because they are changed at each turn and come out very different at the completion of the journey. The finished result is a beautifully unique polished stone.

We are chosen to speak Gods truth, declare His praises and disciple those that are new in faith; not to convince people to believe. We should also remember we are chosen by Him, even in the face of rejection by our friends, family, community. Being used of God and made by Him for His purposes is the goal we strive for, not to be held in esteem by men as heroes. In keeping this as our focus when we are rejected by people, we can shake it off knowing we are in right standing with God and chosen by Him.

Sink Into Your Ears -21

In Luke 4:23 Jesus accuses the people of having an attitude of suspicion of His preaching and proposes. They might have tried to use the well-known proverb “physician, heal thyself” against Him. What do you think about this saying?

How do we balance being used of God in whatever state we are in and maintaining a good reputation so people will be more accepting?

Have you ever been held back from doing or saying something because of your past? What did you do to break free?

Describe some key events in your life that you would consider “living stone” transformations. Write them next to these words to identify the stage you were in with God.

Moved - _____
Rubbed - _____
Washed - _____

TRULY, I TELL YOU

Polished - _____
Pounded - _____
Hurled - _____
Smacked - _____
Eroded - _____

Describe a time you had to walk away due to rejection of God's work in the moment. If you don't have one, describe a time you were led to stay and work it out.

Describe a time when you were after that "Hometown Hero" welcome. Did you get it? If so, how did God use this favor? If not, how did you cope?

Read Romans 8:28. From any of the situations you've described in this study section, how did God work the situation for good?

Take one idea from this Chapter and share it this week with someone.
*"And they have defeated evil by the blood of the Lamb, **by the word of their testimony**, and they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die." Revelation 12:11 New Living Translation*

CINDY ROWE

My Umbrella – 21

Handwriting practice lines for the poem "My Umbrella". The page contains 21 horizontal lines for writing. A large, diagonal watermark reading "WESTBOW PRESSES" is visible across the center of the page.



This effort started with a simple goal: Make available God inspired insights, poetry and photo art, and share my testimony. Writing books that explore scriptures is the avenue God has provided to share the insights He gives. Photo art has become a way to express The Lord's beauty as seen through my eyes. Poetry has been a part of my life since I was young, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to share my heart in this way. Visiting groups and churches speaks to my commitment to God's calling for my life to encourage others to reach their fullness in Christ and share my testimony. Currently, my husband live in Roatan, Honduras. We have four grown children and three grandchildren. Over the years I have served The Lord through leadership in various church programs including children's ministry, women's ministry, worship and choir, drama groups, and puppetry. I have also authored books, essays, small group studies, scripts, leadership training guides, and choreographed musicals and worship dance productions.

To contact the author visit her website:
www.simplycindyrowe.com

BOOKS

PHOTOS

MINISTRY

"Truly, I Tell You"

Studying the Words of Jesus
- Book Two -



Cindy Rowe