Miracles. A Glass of Milk. A Testimony, and a Testimony lost.

How many times have we each lost something of value, great or small? Money. A watch. A phone. The keys to our car? Don’t most of us forget and lose things, as a default. With practice though, we can change that, have more awareness, and protect our valuable things. I now have a habit where I check my pants pocket as soon as I stand up, to see if my wallet is still there. Same with my phone. A built in habit now, I don’t forget these things. In addition to habits, we can listen. Listen very closely.

One time many years ago when my children were young, I was sitting on the couch in our living room reading a book. I could hear the kids playing somewhere else in the house. It was calm in the living room. I had something to eat, and a tall glass of cold milk sitting on the arm of the couch. As I read my book, I distinctly heard and felt the Spirit tell me to move my glass of milk to a better location. I thought, why should I do that, I’m not going to spill it. I’ll be careful. I ignored the prompting. In less than a minute later, two kids suddenly came running through the living room, chasing each other with laughter. One of them bumped my tall glass of milk sitting there, and it spilled towards me, covering me in milk and all over the couch. They sped out of the room clueless as to what they just did. I don’t even remember which of my kids did that, my mind was caught up in the milk mess. They never returned, but there I was, having full recollection of the strange prompting I had just received, but ignored, and now I was thinking about my pathetic situation sitting there all soaked in milk.

If only I had listened to and acted upon that very distinct prompting I got from the Spirit!

Somehow, I think God knew I would absolutely IGNORE that prompting, testing me, because I was not trained enough yet to listen. He knew I would try and use my logic to say, “why should I move that? There is no problem here. I can safely ignore that “idea.”

But was it just an idea? The proof came, the lesson was learned, and I moved in the direction of listening better to those still small voice promptings and feelings.

I have often thought about this experience in decades since, and now when I receive a prompting even if I do not understand why, I strive to act on it anyway, in faith, showing trust in it. Do people live this way? Yes, some do.

So what of those that decide the treasured Testimony of the gospel of Christ they once had, and knew at one time was true, is no longer true? Forgetting the past feelings and happiness of it, they now think that they were tricked or lied to by their parents, leaders, or even the prophets. In this state of thinking, the sacred things that Jesus Christ called the Pearl of Great Price in His parable, are just thrown out and completely dismissed as a lie. How can such a harsh reaction be the right reaction? Disillusionment is a very real experience, but it usually comes in frustration, a condition that is often emotional. Disillusionment is not based necessarily in knowledge, but it does represent a serious erosion of trust. In fact, many people find themselves disillusioned because of an incomplete set of facts, or even by a misunderstanding of the context or situation, but nevertheless thinking that they DO understand the full situation. As trust begins to disappear and doubts not only creep in but overtake, trust is being dissolved by the acids of frustration, anger, or cynicism. Wouldn’t being proactive at saving rather than destroying be the better approach? Throwing out the baby with the bathwater is a metaphor that fits this “falling away” condition.

What if a prized fruit tree in our yard was dying of thirst, and as a result the leaves and branches withered away and hardening was setting in… Would we blame the tree and cut it down and start over? Or would we strive to heavily water the tree, rescue it, loosen the soil around it and add fertilizer, and water it again and again to nourish it back to full health?

You know what we would do! We would try to first save that tree, before it is too late. And we would notice the health of that tree before it was too late.

Spiritually, a Testimony is just like that tree. A personal knowledge of truth of some spiritual thing, a witness given to us from God by the power of the Holy Ghost, and which we KNEW that at the time was true. We felt it. It didn’t have to be logical. Logic is so overrated anyway, there is no logic that explains the miracles and healings that Jesus did. Logic is overrated compared to belief and faith.

If we knew we had a witness and thus had a testimony of some doctrine, then why does this testimony, this tree that grew from nourishing it, how does it then become “untrue” once we find some other “facts” that challenge it on the surface, and then we purposefully STOP watering the tree, and in fact, kill it of our own free will? Causing the tree to wither and die?

Once this tree is killed, many of these find that other trees begin to die as well. The Bible is no longer true, but just some interesting metaphorical stories, but didn’t really happen. Jesus didn’t really suffer for our sins, and there really isn’t a need for a Savior because we will all be let into heaven in the end. Or worse, there is no God, but we all just need to be nice to each other and show love.

One might ask that person, how and why do they think or believe that love is necessary, especially when they are saying there is no higher power that ever instructed people HOW they must love or do the right things in this life. No, the natural man, the godless man, is an enemy to God and has been from the very beginning. The natural man commits adultery. That is not love. The natural man does whatever they want, and if there is no right or wrong, then there can be no punishment. But these same people want law and order for some reason. You can’t have this both ways.

Choose God. He is real. All things denote that there is a God. The very earth upon which we live. The very miraculous and organized bodies in which we dwell demand logically, that there was a creator. To deny this is to turn a blind eye to the obvious truth of it, which is a choice, but not one without consequence.

In killing the tree of testimony through willful neglect, can we logically claim that our first witness we got from God is not true, when it is in fact ourselves that killed the tree rather than choose to nourish and protect it?

How does a new internet search “fact” make the first facts of a spiritually based testimony untrue? I don’t see how one can trump the other. When conflicts come, the truth should be protected, and the challenger should tested for fraud and sources carefully checked to see if there is any bias or negative angst. Remember always how much negative and hateful angst there was against Jesus Christ himself, and especially when they said “Release Barrabbas!” instead of the Christ. Pilate washed his hands of the murder of it, and all the people deceived themselves that they had condemned an evil man, Jesus. They condemned GOD to death. Remember that! Remember that this happened, and truth was rejected with an emotional angst against Jesus Christ. Why would these thing be absent from today’s world? They are here too, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints is subject to these similar evil powers that exist in high places, and which seek to undermine and eliminate the doctrines of Christ. The spiritual battle in the last days is huge, fought on numerous fronts, on the back of the internet.

In light of this, why would we trust in doubts of the first testimony, our sacred individual witness from God that was true to us, and we felt the peaceable joy that comes from the Holy Ghost? Why would we take this pearl of great price, no longer treasure it, and cast it far away? Does the fact of it being no longer treasured, make it of no value? If it were a pocket of diamonds, and we became disillusioned with their value to us, cast them off a cliff and walk on… are the diamonds of the same value still, or are they worthless?

With the advent of the internet came myriads of opposing opinions including many cynical lies parading as facts or proper understandings. With so many “fact checkers” in the Year 2021, isn’t it obvious that the lies have most recently blossomed? The conflict of words, opinions, and ideologies have mushroomed more than any other time of earth. Why in today’s world with this internet that has literally muddied the water of thinking and truth, how could one rapidly embrace a radical turning upside down of things, like the potters clay? So many are like sheep embracing the “facts” of the “fact checkers” which are largely political, partisan, and secular in nature, having little respect for God. Most of those who are falling away from the truth are buying into the arguments of those who have already fallen away from the truth. The real question and mystery is why are people choosing this easy way out if it is not because of some underlying sin that they have no desire to resolve with the process of repentance?

If one finds something adversarial to their beliefs in a Google search, how does it become an authoritative source to that person? Is it really? Or is it a confirmation bias?

Do the Snopes people have a lock on facts, spiritual or secular or scientific? Obviously not, they are merely an ordinary couple that ran some internet blog out of their house, and it went viral. Viral does not mean truth. It means popular.

There are spiritual “fact checkers” out there too, many of who were once joyful in their own testimony of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ restored by Jesus Christ to His prophet Joseph Smith, but who now have cast that Pearl of Great Price to the wayside for some reason, and are presenting information that could be untrue, could be missing needed information, or could be purposefully biased and jaded with the intent to deceive or even mock. By what power does anyone know the truth such a thing? Jesus said “Fools mock, but they shall mourn.” So how does one detect a liar? By the Gift of Discernment of course, and this is a gift of the Holy Ghost. But what if 99 people lie about something, and 1 person tells the truth, does the 99 person lie become the truth?

Certainly there is a better way to find truth than seeking out what the majority think. That’s sheeple mindset, very common today.

Consider our testimony and faith as a tree, that needs water and constant nourishment, especially in the early growth years. This ensures that the tree does not wither and die because of neglect. The death of a small tree is not the fault of the tree, but of the conditions of soil, water, sunlight, and possibly the steward who could have taken better care of it by watering it, fertilizing it. Protecting it.

If you, who have fallen away, have once thought to sing the song of redeeming love, can you feel so now? And if not, why not? Coming back is the best option for a fulness of blessings and happiness and peace. I testify that these things are true. Consider this wonderful teaching of the ancient prophet Alma who taught about faith in his sermon, comparing it to a seed.