

Chapter Eleven: One Man's Truth

Laevious enters the quiet Hillside Assembly Church where Pastor Ronald Morgan had passed away while cleaning the pews. "Laevious, do you remember this man? It was not too far away that you brought him to My door." "Yes Lord I remember him." Replies Laevious. "Did you ever wonder why this man did not enter into My kingdom? Why I did not open to him even though he pleaded with Me?" "Lord, it did cross my thoughts when it first happened, but I did not question Your judgment." While Laevious I want you to understand through seeing what happened that you may know the truth." And with that Laevious is taken to a rainforest deep in the Australian mountains, where the silence of the wild gives way to the whimper of a child newborn.

Laevious hears and watches as Karen Morgan has just given birth to her first child; "I want to name him Ronald." She speaks as she gazes into the child's newborn face. Her attendant takes the child and lays him in a basket filled with blankets to keep him warm and covered so the insects can't get to him. "Laevious, this is Ronald, born to a loving mother and father who traveled the world in search of new medicines to help cure the sicknesses of men. They believed that the work they were doing was good and they brought Ronald up to believe that all we do is for the good of all. The scene changes and Laevious is taken to a little cottage in the hills of Scotland. Laevious watches as a now seven year old Ronald walks out holding the hand of His elderly grandmother Penelope Morgan, they are dressed and on their way to church. "You see Laevious Penelope was the one who raised Ronald while his father and mother traveled the world looking for new cures. He saw them at least once a year but was taught to believe that the work they were doing was all in the name of the Lord." "Lord, were they doing Your work?" "The work that they did was for the good of all and in that they were doing My work." With that Laevious is taken to the church that Ronald and his grandmother is attending; he watches and listens as Ronald kneels down and starts to pray. "Dear God, please watch over my mom and dad as they are away doing Your work. Help them to find the medicine that will make Your people well and keep them safe from all those things that may hurt them. Thank You God for grandma for taking care of me until they come home, I miss them a lot, I hope they come home soon! Amen." And with that Laevious is moved by such an innocent prayer from a child's voice. "Do you hear and see Ronald? He has learned that what his mother and father is doing is good for all and is grateful because they are helping many, yet he longs for them and is learning that the work is sometimes more important than family."

The scene changes and Laevious is standing in this same small hillside church and is watching Ronald who is now sixteen years old. He is talking to some of the children who are between the ages of eight and twelve and is sharing his testimony about giving.

“Giving is not only about caring and fulfilling, it is about sacrifice. My mother and father love me and care about me but has to sacrifice time with me to do the work that will help the many in the future. I believe that what they are doing is the greatest thing that anyone can do for the good of others.” One of the children raises their hand to speak, “yes Samuel?” “Well, don’t you miss your parents? I would miss them if they were gone as long as yours are.” “I do miss them but I am comforted in knowing that they are doing God’s work.” Replies Ronald. Another child chimes in; “That sounds nice and all, but I would still miss them more then.” “I do miss them, but I understand.” “How can you understand your parents being gone for months at a time without a word?” “I just do.” Replies Ronald. “Wow, you must really love God to except this, I don’t think I could stand it!” the children chuckle; “I do love God, that’s why He helps me to understand.” And with that the children get up and run out of the church while Pastor Henry Slate walks in. “That was a wonderful testimony Ronald, I know the children may not understand where your coming from right now, but in time they will!” speak Pastor Slate as he gets closer to Ronald. “Thanks you Pastor Slate, I appreciate your input. And what are you doing here so late in the afternoon? I thought you had a conference to attend this night?” “I do, but I thought it would be nice to take someone with me. You know, tonight they have a missionary coming to speak and I thought maybe you might want to join me.” With that Ronald jumps to his feet in excitement; “I’d love to go! Let me call my grandmother to let her know.” “No need to Ronald, I spoke with her this morning before you came and she agreed that this may be good for you, she said you could go with me and I will drop you off later.” And with that Ronald grabs his coat and walks out of the church with Pastor Slate. “Lord, is Ronald’s testimony of his parents true? Are they always away and does he really believe that being apart is really Your work?” asks Laevius. “Ronald has been taught to believe so he does not hurt. His faith has grown because of this understanding and in that there is truth. But how deep that truth is in his heart is only known by Ronald and I and only he can testify of it. Ronald is a good son and is trying to follow in the faith of his parents.”

The scene changes again and Ronald is now a young man of twenty one stepping off of a bus in front of Saint Anthony’s Priory. Laevius looks on as Father Jacob Laskin greets Ronald. “Ronald, dear boy, it is so good to see you again!” “Father Laskin, it is so good to be back!” Ronald speaks as they shake hands. “So tell me, how was your trip to Africa this time? I want to hear all the details after you settle in.” “I have so much to share and so many pictures to show you!” “Wonderful! So let’s get you in and I will get a pot of coffee ready.” And with that they both enter into the priory’s dorm room. “Lord, it seems that Ronald has taken up missionary work, and from what I see he seems very happy doing it.” “Yes Laevius, Ronald has become a missionary to do God’s work and is very happy at all that he has experienced during this time. Ronald is learning quickly about working for the Lord and is enjoying it with all his heart. But I want you to see more, enter in and follow Ronald.” “Yes Lord” speaks Laevius as he trails behind Ronald who enters into his dorm room. Ronald drops his bags on the floor and falls backwards onto his bed, he puts his hands behind his head and starts to reminisce of his time spent in Africa. He sits up and looks around to

find a note hanging from his dresser mirror. It is from Catherine, the woman that Ronald left in the priory when he went on his nine month mission to Africa. Ronald gets up and grabs the note, as he opens it he can tell it is from Catherine by the stationery that it is written on. As Ronald reads his face changes and he puts the note down and walks back to the bed, this time he lays face down and starts to cry. Laevius steps over to the dresser and takes a look at the note and starts to read.

The note says; “Dear Ronald, you have been gone for such a long time and I have missed you dearly. I hope what you sought for in Africa you found, but I could not wait any longer. I have found that our time apart has not made my heart grow fonder of you, but less loving towards you. You wanted to go to fulfill a void that I could not fill; you are searching for something that I seem to not be able to give. I want you to know that from the first day we met I loved you, but over time I also found that I didn’t want to share you with the world. Right now you would have been gone almost six months and you knew that this was my last year here at Saint Anthony’s, but you wanted to go anyway. So Ronald, I want you to know this, I only desire the best for you, your happiness, your joy, your love, may they all be filled to overflowing! As for me, I am off to the military, my desire to serve God through our country’s needs is important to me and I don’t think that we could survive the time and the distance. Please know that you will always be dear to me. Continue your work for God because I know He has a great plan for you. Much love and regret, Catherine”

Laevius looks towards Ronald as he has risen from the bed and gone into the bathroom to wash his face and prepare himself to meet with Father Laskin. “Lord why did he not wait until she left? They are always going on mission trips; could he not wait a few months longer because of love?” “Laevius, it is not that simple. Ronald had started to put his work over love and Catherine understood that, but could not have it for herself. To Catherine love was more important than missions for God.” “But isn’t doing Your work the most important thing a man can do?” asks Laevius “Love is the most important thing Laevius, but love comes in different forms. Knowing which love is the right love can only be determined by the heart of the man, for where a man’s heart is that’s where his treasure is.” With that Laevius is moved to a different room in the building and is now watching Ronald and father Laskin sip coffee as pictures are spread over the coffee table and Ronald continues to share of the events in Africa. “Oh Father you should have been there this time! Thousands of people showed up for the rally, hundreds gave their lives to Jesus Christ that night! It was a night to remember!” Father Laskin smiles and looks up over his glasses at Ronald, “Ronald I want to ask you something and I want you to be honest with me.” “Go ahead Father, you can ask me anything!” Replies Ronald. “okay, I want to ask you about Catherine.” Ronald becomes silent as he stares into the eyes of Father Laskin; “Ronald why did you leave when you did? I mean, you were not scheduled to leave until the summer, so why did you leave early during the winter days?” “Well Father,” replies Ronald, “I wanted to go so badly that I felt I couldn’t wait another seven months to go.” “But what about Catherine? Did not the two of you decide that you were both going into the service of the military to be chaplains? I am

sure Catherine left you a note, but what happened to change your mind?” Ronald looks at Father Laskin and starts to tear; “Father, I don’t know! I felt like I had to do this now or I would lose something I had with God.” “What do you mean son? What could you lose that you have now?” Laevius watches as Father Laskin tries to get Ronald to share his heart about Catherine and the decisions he has made to cause the change in events for the both of them. “Ronald I thought you both had it planned? I want to share with you what happened after you left. Catherine came to me a few days before you were to leave. She had shared with me about the plans the both of you had for a life together in the service of the military. She said that your plans were to wait till the summer and go on one last short mission trip to Africa in the summer before you both went into service. She said that once you both became chaplains that you were to be married and start a family. Is this true?” Ronald looks towards Father Laskin and starts to speak, “It is true. We started planning this during our second years here and together.” “Then what changed boy? Why did you leave and break up the future between the both of you? I had told Catherine to talk to you before it was too late, I told her that she was to tell you her heart and see what would come of it. I told her that it would have been best to know the truth then to hurt. Did she talk to you Ronald? Did she tell you her heart?” Ronald stayed quiet for a bit as he rose up and looked out the window. “She did come and talk to me a couple of days before I left. She asked me one question, if I was happy in going. I said I was and how much I was looking forward to this trip. I remember her looking at me and as her eyes started to water she said, ‘then I am happy for you’. And with that she never spoke of it again.” “Oh, I see, she loved you that much. Well after you left she finished her last six months, graduated and signed up for the military. She did not go on her last mission trip because she felt that the mission was over and a new life needed to begin.” Laevius continued to look on as the Lord spoke, “Laevius did you hear that? Did you feel the love in that woman’s actions?” “Yes Lord I did, she gave him his life to do his work.” “That’s right Laevius, true love, true sacrifice.” And with that the scene changed as Laevius watches a now thirty year old Ronald stand in the midst of a crying congregation.

“My fellow friends, it is with a sorrowful yet joyous heart that I stand here today to tell you about a man that brought so much love and hope into the world. Father Henry Laskin. He was more than just my Sheppard, he was my friend, my mentor, and my spiritual father. Today we honor this man for all he has done for our community and our lives. Father Laskin will always be remembered as the man who knew God’s heart. He had a way of telling you things to make you see the God in all things. I will miss him dearly, yet I know that the day he was called home that the heavens were opened and our Lord greeted him with open arms. He will be missed but he will never be forgotten!” And as Ronald steps away from the pulpit Father Jethro Crane steps up to speak. “Father Laskin spoke to me just before he had passed away and he had asked me to relay a few messages to all of you. If you would please hear what our beloved Father had spoken. To sister Martha, he has asked if you could continue your blessed work with our youths for you have changed many lives through your loving care and compassion; to brother Matthew, he has asked if you would continue teaching our missionaries abroad for you bring them great comfort and strength in this valued service. And

to Brother Ronald, whom he had taken under his wing to prepare for the commission of ministry, he has asked if you will continue to minister here in the house of Hillside Assemble Church in His name and power. And with all this spoken he has also asked for all of you to continue to support our ministers in their ministry for God's service and that this is the hour that we pull together in strength, in hope, in unity, and in love." Father Jethro continues to speak as Laevieus starts to talk to God. "So this is how he became the pastor, buy default. Father Laskin was hoping to that Ronald would continue in his place so he prepared him for this service by teaching him all areas of ministry. I remember the youths he sat with, the missions he went on and the many different works he participated in. It seems that Father Laskin made a good choice." God replies to Laevieus; "Laevieus, Ronald is a good man in every sense of the word, he would have made Father Laskin proud, but there is more to being a good man then the works that a man does. If a man is recognized for all the good works that he does but feels only for the work, is this man still good? If a man continues to build another's faith but his faith never grows, is he a faithful man? If a man loves all that is in his life and accepts all pain and suffering required for that service, does that make him a loving man?" Laevieus ponders the questions that God has asked and comes up with only one answer; "No. As I have watched this mans life and his walk with You I have learned that one must be moved by love and not for the love." "Very good Laevieus, now follow, the end is here."

Laevieus turns around to finds himself standing in the back of Hillside Assembly Church. Laevieus looks around and finds that Pastor Ronald is going through the pews, one by one, and wiping them down by himself. Laevieus walks closer to Ronald but starts to hear the sound of whimpering. Ronald is wiping down the pews but at the same time he is crying. Ronald starts to speak out with a loud voice, "Father why do I feel this way? Why can I not shake this feeling that keeps overpowering me?" As Ronald continues to wipe he raises his voice louder, "I have done everything I can think of to bring glory to your name, but yet I am alone! You called me into this, You showed me, You tried me, and I thought You delivered me, but I still feel like this! What more can I do? What have I not done to show You I love You? Why do I still feel this empty feeling?" Ronald sits down and puts his hands into his face, "I am tired, so busy, so lonely, so....." And with that Ronald falls into a sleep that he will never come out of. Laevieus looks upon Ronald then turns his eyes towards the heavens; "Lord, I see that his void could not be filled, all that he had done throughout his whole life was done to feel worthy and loved. He thought that turning his heart towards You was a way to forget the pains of life's rejections, then he got lost in them thinking that the end result was more important than love!" "Yes Laevieus, he used ministry to run from the truth, he was heartbroken, lonely, and no matter what he did, no matter how many works he accomplished in My name, he couldn't love Me completely. His pains and sufferings were his driving force to forget." "But Lord, did You forget his works?" "Laevieus, I will never forget all that he had done for so many, but part of healing others is about being healed, and part of loving others is learning to love yourself also. This man was a good man in the eyes of all that held him close, in My eyes also, but love is the key that opens the door of heaven! And that key I

do not give; one must find it deep within their hearts through truth, honesty, and sacrifice. I have given every man this key, but mankind must find it for them self.” “Lord, I see that Your judgment was true, a just man received his just reward.” And with that Laevius is taken back to the doors of the hospital room that Samantha lies still, breathing hard and deep.