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The Voice of Jesus

by Linda Chubbuck (Johnson) Concordia Kansas

A few weeks ago, my 10 year old son and I were chatting about *A Course in Miracles*. I told him how it came (without mentioning a source) and read him the introduction. He was enchanted.

The next day, he asked another question about it. I answered. The following day, I noticed him flipping through the *Course* himself. Strange, I thought.

"August, what is it about the *Course* that especially interests you? I asked.

He replied, with a sense of wonder, "It's the Voice! It's gentle, but commanding.... like Aslan!"

I felt a shiver of awe pass through me. He is currently devouring each of the books in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series, by C.S. Lewis. And Aslan, the Lion, is known to be Lewis's metaphor for Christ. August had recognized the Voice of Jesus in the *Course* as familiar to him, and as loving and powerful.

My childhood experience of Jesus was the opposite. By the time I was a

young woman, I wanted no part of Jesus. His very name made me feel nauseated and repelled. It conjured up images from childhood sermons of suffering, bloody thorns on his head, and my own guilty part in the crucifixion.

Too willful to come to Jesus out of obedience and fear, I instead rejected, by my early 20's, the whole business - God, along with his scolding, judgmental Son, and all the rules which would almost certainly condemn me to hell. If I didn't believe in them, they couldn't hurt me, could they?

By my mid-30's my defiance caught up with me. Though living an apparently successful life, I was coming apart at the seams inside. In great humility, I came to know God through the simple medium of prayer. My journey had begun.

My resentment of Jesus, however, continued. Eventually, I found myself offering Jesus himself a simple prayer - "Sorry, Jesus, that I can't stand you. I know it's not your fault, all the things people have done in your name. But I just get along better without you. Thanks for understanding." I continued on my way.

Living in the Bible Belt, I was reminded regularly of His presence. "Jesus" bumper stickers.... "How crude! Just the sort of people to try and cram Him down your throat, no doubt!" "Jesus Died for Your Sins" road signs.... I could hardly bear to look at them, they irritated me so.

A few years after my reconnection to God, I was given a gift of *A Course in Miracles*. Intrigued, I opened it, and tried. But as soon as I understood that Jesus was a part of it, I closed it again. No way. Sorry, but my stomach turned again. The book sat on my shelf.

I began, however, to read authors who wrote of the Course - Jerry Jampolsky, and later, Marianne Williamson. They wisely, I thought, omitted any annoying mention of Jesus. So I could take it. I savored their books.

Then in November 1993, in an emotional crisis, I was led to a stanch and compassionate Baptist woman, to whom I poured out my fears of the church, Jesus, and hell. She listened lovingly, and offered to pray with me. She asked if I wanted to invite Jesus into my life. Terrified and in tears, I agreed. We prayed together and I did so.

I drove home in a panic. What had I done? This Man, this symbol of fear and judgment and hell and suffering - I had invited Him into my life? Did I have to stop all sin instantly? Would I go to hell? What did I have to believe now? I was sobbing.

I came to my computer, weeping, and wrote out all the questions... poured them out. As the questions ended, a Voice at my left shoulder, with the power to be heard over all my fears, spoke: "There are answers."

"There are answers."

It was so loving, so powerful. I knew it was Jesus speaking, and I understood that He meant the answers would unfold ahead of me, and that I need not be afraid. I was comforted.

An hour later, I picked up the *Course*, and this time, did not set it down. I devoured the Text, then began the lessons over the next few weeks. I hungered for it, and cried and wept as I took in His words, His love. Here were the answers I had asked for.

Looking back, I know that I was pulled by His power, over the wall of my distrust, into His arms. For quite some time, I preferred to pray to the Holy Spirit, while acknowledging Jesus' place in the whole system. The more abstract form of God seemed "safer" somehow. But recently, I have realized that true intimacy is linked to forgiveness - and forgiveness is Jesus' realm.

The Voice that I heard at times, but preferred to call the Holy Spirit, or my angels, I now address as "Jesus." That Voice is, as my son put it, always "gentle, but commanding." Never scolding, shaming, or condemning

- but always very, very intimate and tender and personal.

Last week, I told my son a bit about my former repulsion for Jesus, and asked how he (raised outside the church) thought of Jesus, when he thought of Him.

He replied, not surprisingly I guess, "Like Aslan."

I still find myself carrying shame and embarrassment as I use the name of Jesus. Or my cynical ego voice will berate me that I am losing my sanity, listening to "voices!" But the consistency, and the compelling quality of His Voice reassure me.

If Jesus can speak through different humans, and still be lovingly recognized by a child... that is the Voice I want to hear forever.

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Read the expanded version of this story in Linda's new book, *Who Do You Think You Are? stories and songs that sung me whole*, by Linda J. Chubbuck. Available on this website.