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## **Nothing Less Than Radically Shocking**

My entire journey toward coming to see, understand and preach the Gospel of our Adoption into the Trinity has been a Radical Shock in every kind of way!

I first came to see it roughly six years ago, and it all started at Higher Ground Summer Camp. I was asked by the Camp Director, PD Kurts, to speak that year, and did. As we sat at the lunch table he asked me more specifically about what I was going to speak on in my next message. In a nutshell, I said something to the effect of “a grace message but with a caution about the ability to lose your salvation.”

In one sense of speaking, from my perspective, he went “slap off”! He confronted me in a very dominating way and reinforced to me our inability to lose salvation once we have it – “Once saved, always saved” he argued! Needless to say, I was radically shocked, hurt, angry, and fought back! I got defensive and we both began to argue at that lunch table with wife and friends around in a vehement way! It’s very embarrassing now to see how much we will fight for religion!

I just couldn’t see it, and I was determined to preach “the whole counsel of God!” Ha-ha! But PD kept making his case, and I kept making mine. To PD’s credit, there is one thing I remember feeling compelled to say as we wound down the argument, and that was, “Well PD, I like what you are saying, and if you and I were preaching in the same place, I’d rather preach what you are preaching than what I am preaching! In fact, I would preach what you’re preaching in order to keep the unity!” That HAD to be the Holy Spirit in me because I was intent on taking the next few weeks to look into my bible and try to prove PD wrong!!

Needless to say, I was Radically Shocked again!! As I began to study my counter arguments based on passages in the book of Hebrews, it came to me to just study the entire book, verse-by-verse. As I did this in conjunction with commentary resources, my concordance, and the Holy Spirit, I got another Radical Shock! I discovered I was misinterpreting every verse that seemed to argue for our ability to lose our salvation! How embarrassing!!! I literally turned all kinds of colors in my office chair as I sat before the Father!! I was sick at what I had unintentionally been doing to the Father’s children!

At the same time, I remember reading an article by Mike Feazell or Robert Capon on how the Gospel is not a contract! The article gave me the strongest sense ever that I was saved solely by and IN Jesus Christ, in and apart from my ever believing! Yes, this Radically Shocked me, too, but it really made all of the sense in the world! I couldn’t help but come to the conclusion that if it was true for me, and I had done nothing to get it, then it HAD to be true for every other human being.

I then got a “fire” in my bones like never before and the entire world looked brand new! Talk about a Radically Shocking joy! I literally jumped up and down for weeks as I prayed. I could no longer pray on my knees because the enthusiasm in my body could not be contained!! I experienced, personally, the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price as never before!

I talked to my wife about it and she agreed with it, too! I was then confronted with the reality of a

few more Radical and Shocking things. I was going to have to change everything I had ever preached RIGHT AWAY! I could not in good conscience keep preaching a lie, not even for one more day!

I decided to confirm my understanding with WCG headquarters by writing Mike Feazell, whom I felt understood the same things and was writing about them! Sure enough he did, and was! I'll never forget the Radical Shock I received when Mike Feazell and John McKenna wrote me back on the same day, saying almost the same thing, "I thank God for helping you to see what only he can help you to see!"

That was all the confirmation I needed to keep pressing forward within the WCG and to know that I was in line with Christ-centered theology that we were holding to and proclaiming. I knew that I was going to have to radically repent and apologize to some people! I needed to call PD Kurts and tell him I had a radical change of mind and that he was right about our salvation in Christ. And I did call him!

I was going to have to tell my church that I had been preaching Christ incorrectly and ask them to forgive me and hang in there while I preached Him a little more accurately. I did that, too! Yes, they were Radically Shocked in good ways, and we have not been the same since! I honestly think that everyone in my church smiles during every service now – Radical Shock! ☺ Some were so shocked they quit, but to Jesus' credit, NO ONE left on bad terms or without speaking to me personally about their leaving!

I called an old friend in another state to apologize to him for fighting against him over 12 years ago when he had insisted that everyone was fundamentally good, and I said just the opposite! I saw that we were all good with Jesus' goodness. Jesus is our Good Creator and Sustainer, and we are only twisting the good in us! As best I could, I actually found everyone whom I felt I had wronged in my approach to Christ over the years, and apologized and told them how right they were and why. Ironically, many of them were Radically Shocked, and found it hard to REALLY grasp how true their theologies were IN Christ! ☺

This leads me to the other and Radical Shocking thing that has occurred in all of this: the constant and Radically Shocking rejection and fight at every turn! Good Gravy – that is an understatement! At one level it is not shocking at all; I couldn't receive it at first either! On another level, it was very shocking because I have been repeatedly rejected by many of my long-term friends and associates within the WCG, by public crowds outside the denomination (I got a real fight (and JOY) going at a funeral!), and by some family members!

I think I had assumed that because some in WCG got it, most others either had already gotten it, or would get it fairly easily because of how I thought our denominational culture worked! Boy was I wrong and Radically Shocked!

I have had authority figures mad at me and thinking I was disloyal to the denomination! I have had pastors personally confront me, chew me out, and warn me to stop preaching what I am preaching – BIG TIME! One time an entire group of pastors were talking about me behind my back so badly that it completely turned off a visiting pastor from another denomination who said he

wanted nothing more to do with backstabbing people like he saw at the WCG! Yikes! Talk about a Radical Shock to my ears! I've never felt that way about my brothers and sisters in the WCG and was shocked they felt this way about me! Ha! Understatement!!

I have had people stop inviting me to speak at usual venues I would speak at! People have written me nasty letters, with one person in authority above me going so far as to say I should be fired!!! I have had people compare me to negative people who have been rebellious in the past and whom I didn't even know, let alone try to mimic!!

All of this has been a Radical Shock to me because I have ONLY KNOWN, in my personal denominational experience, people who would look into things deeply, and when found to be wrong, repent and change immediately!! I even got called out to our headquarters office and saw my wife cry under the pressure!

But there is a positive side, too! My headquarters trip was encouraging! I was confirmed in the present theology there, and we discussed ways of preaching and teaching it that might not be so Radically Shocking to people WITHOUT COMPROMISING the Truth of our lives in Jesus! Six years later, everyone and everything seems to be changing and coming more in line with the understanding, teaching and preaching of the Jesus Who has included the whole world in His relationship with His Father!

It's been worth the fight! My family life is better than I could have ever conceived and my children love the Gospel as do most of their many friends! My church has transformed beautifully into some of the most joyous, encouraging and self-giving people I know! Fewer people are giving MORE than ever before in every kind of way!! I have been more free to be the real me rather than always reacting to negative social pressures, and I am happier and more joyful because of it!

Other churches outside of our denomination have come alongside of us to partner in the Gospel. I have some new and great relationships and friendships with very respected, world class theologians, including Dr. Baxter Kruger and the gang at Perichoresis Ministries, Paul Young – author of *The Shack*, Robert Capon and others! Talk about a Radical Shock!

I am not just consumed with spiritual work versus secular work. Instead, I am far more balanced in all of the good things the Father has given me to participate in and experience! People write and call me CONSTANTLY about how much they appreciate knowing about their adoption and how it is transforming their lives. Many leave me encouraging voicemails and I have even taken to the habit of saving and recording them so that I can keep basking in the joy! I am part of new and creative things such as this newsletter and my blog site which receives thousands of hits as people learn about who Jesus is and who they are in Him!

I have never had the intention of being Radically Shocked or to Radically Shock! But, in the end, I have learned that no matter how gracious our words or approach, humanity has been so blinded by lies that the Gospel always strikes us first as scandalous!! The Good News of our Adoption in Jesus is a scandal! It creates a Radically Shocking anger when not embraced AND an even more Radically Shocking joy when embraced.

Yes, I am Radically Shocked that the Father has lavished such love on me to participate, along with you, in Jesus' Blessings and Sufferings in His Intention and Passion for the World to know Him as he REALLY is! Me?! You?! That makes no sinful human sense, but it makes more sense in the Righteous Human Jesus Christ, Who Loves me and you, and all of us, MORE than He Loves Himself!

In his Grace and Love, He exercises His Freedom as he sees fit. In the end, all we can do is cover our faces in perplexity and awe, share in the worship of Jesus, and thank the Triune God Who does exceeding abundantly above all that we can ever ask or think!

*~ Tim Brassell*