

## More random thoughts about Biblical Paradoxes:

Some of the **grand paradoxes of Christianity**:

- We see unseen things.
- We conquer by yielding.
- We find rest under a yoke.
- We reign by serving.
- We are made great by becoming small.
- We are exalted when we are humble.
- We become wise by being fools for Christ's sake.
- We are made free by becoming slaves.
- We gain strength when we are weak.
- We triumph through defeat.
- We find victory by glorying in our infirmities.
- We live by dying.

Referring to our **Lenten theme**, what God tells us in Isaiah 55:8 applies. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord." Each of our Lent themes were like paradoxes, both true realities. But those paradoxes led us to one just a little more than the other.

- From security to generosity.
- From fear to compassion.
- From earning to receiving.
- From exceptionalism to inclusion.
- From scarcity to abundance.
- From power over to power with.
- From certainty to openness.

**Paradoxes are not always in the same text.** The Bible invites us to compare, contrast and see how different ideas and situations can give light to God's Kingdom. For example:

We are told to: Give up your tunic; withhold your pearls.

"Give to the one who asks you." (Matthew 5:40-41)

"Don't toss your pearls before pigs." (Matthew 7:6)

Which is it? What do we learn holding up both side by side?

**Why does the writer of Titus use this well known paradox?**

What is the point that is being made? We need to read more than this one verse. Many think this is a humorous statement. "One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." Titus 1:12

This is the Epimenides Paradox. If Epimenides himself was a Cretan and all Cretans are liars, then Epimenides is also a liar. If Epimenides is a liar, then the statement that "all Cretans are liars" must be a lie, which means all Cretans tell the truth, which means Epimenides tells the truth, which means the statement "all Cretans are liars" is both true and false.

My grandfather dug post-holes with an **old-fashioned auger**. Turning the giant corkscrew, the farmer needed both strength and balance to push on one handle while pulling on the other. Under his practiced hands, every push/pull half turn caused the auger to bite deeper into the hard soil. (From Richard Hansen)

Nothing is more useless than a one-handled auger! Maximum effect is achieved when you position your hands at the very ends of the handles. Slide your hands toward the middle, and the auger becomes proportionately less effective. Likewise, we do ourselves no favor by whittling down opposing extremes of a two-handled paradox.

Addressing the person who asks, "**How will Christianity improve my life?**" C. S. Lewis replied: Frankly, I find it hard to sympathize with this state of mind. One of the things that distinguishes people from the other animals is that we want to know things, want to find out what reality is like, simply for the sake of knowing. When that desire is completely quenched in anyone, I think he has become something less than human.

**May we keep enjoying, struggling, learning, and allowing God's paradoxes to form and shape our faith and lives!**