

Want to Hear a Good Story?

By Steve Brown

A number of years ago, I participated in a brown bag lunch for students at a seminary. They asked questions and were disturbed by some of the things I said in my talk. A professor (who loves me and was trying to help) stood and said, “Now, let me explain what Steve is talking about in terms that are a bit less radical.”

He then proceeded to soften what I had said, and in fact softened it to the point that it wasn’t what I had taught at all. I thought I might correct him, but I decided to let it pass and remained silent.

I remember driving home that day, feeling dirty. I told God it would never happen again. I would never allow what he had clearly taught in Scripture to be ameliorated by anyone—not even someone who loved me and meant well.

There’s a cartoon in my office that shows a pastor standing before a traumatized, shocked congregation with the caption/disclaimer, “Now Steve didn’t mean exactly what you think he meant.” Actually, yes, I do.

I mean exactly what I teach and, no matter how shocking, heretical

and radical it sounds, it’s exactly what the Bible teaches about grace. In fact, it is the essence of the Christian faith.

In our efforts to be religious, right and righteous, we sometimes forget how shocking and counterintuitive the gospel message really is.

Telling Christians that God will never be angry at them no matter what they do, where they go or how badly they screw up can be disconcerting. But it can also be exciting to watch as students start to understand, knowing that they will then teach it to others.

I sometimes think that I have finally gone too far to be brought home. There are places in my life where I struggle to hold on, where I have my doubts about God’s love for me, and where I think, *nothing could be this good*.

But when I teach others, something happens to me and I find myself dancing again. So I don’t go to the seminary to teach or a pulpit to preach or a conference to speak...for them. I do it for me.

But wait, there’s more. I’m not without compassion for others. I

know people—people are my business and I am “people.”

It’s so easy to get discouraged. All my life I’ve been around people with broken hearts who have secrets they can’t share and sins they can’t shake.

I’ve listened to a lot of confessions and I’ve felt what Jesus felt. You hang out with him long enough, and you start feeling what he feels and caring the way he cares.

Matthew wrote, “When he [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

Harassed and helpless without a shepherd. I see a lot of that. I’ve often prayed that I would see what Jesus sees, feel what Jesus feels, and think his thoughts after him. When I do, I tell people about the real God who is kind, merciful and gracious.

During a break yesterday in a class I was teaching, one of my students asked, “Mr. Brown, do you want to hear a good story?” I told him I would sell my soul for a good story.

He told me about his little sister who had written him a letter for his birthday. She wrote about how much she admired him and how he was so good and kind and followed Jesus so closely.

"I realized that she thinks I'm perfect and I knew that I needed to tell her the truth. So I went to her room and began to confess my sins to her. She asked why I was doing it and I told her I was afraid she would think God loved us because we're good and I didn't want her to think that."

Then this young man said his sister began to cry. "I just held her and let her cry," he said.

"I asked if she thought she had to be perfect in order for God to love her. She nodded her head and I told her she didn't have to do anything—that God loves her just her way she is."

She asked through her tears, "Why?" I said, "He loves you because you're his. That's all."

The story of God's love is a story that needs to be told. When we tell it to one another, all sorts of good things happen. When we don't, Jesus still loves us, but we miss the power of the story in our own lives. □

Steve Brown has graced our pages for many years. Steve is a professor, author and radio personality and the president of Key Life Network.

BREAKING NEWS—CWRpress and Brad Jersak receive second Gold Medal!

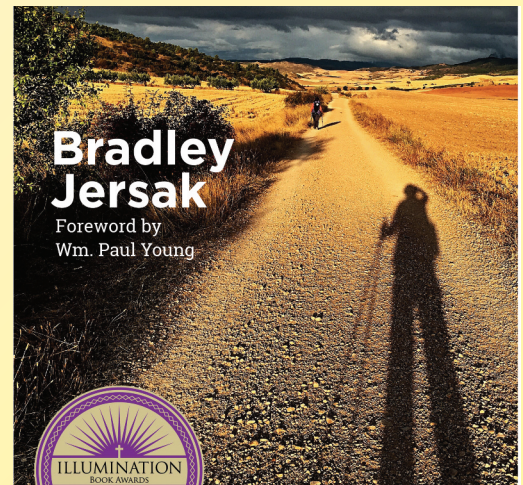
In 2016 *A More Christlike God*, by Brad Jersak, published by CWRpress in 2015, received the Enduring Light Gold Medal from Illumination Book Awards.

Now, in 2020, *A More Christlike Way*, also by Brad Jersak, published by CWRpress in 2019, once again received the Enduring Light Gold Medal from Illumination Book Awards.


Dr. Jersak's *A More Christlike God* has been published in three languages so far, with enthusiastic readers all over the world regarding it as a lifechanging book. *A More Christlike Way*, the highly anticipated follow up to *A More Christlike God*, is already receiving high praise, and it promises to impact the lives of readers in a similar way.

Students and seekers of Jesus will be thrilled with the transforming insights in both of these Gold Medal Award winning books.

Both volumes are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) in hard copy and digital formats, as well as audio.



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CHRISTLIKE
WAY**
A More
Beautiful Faith



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