

Did you ever see Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade?

It *may* be the *best* of the series –

Indiana Jones winds up chasing after the Holy *Grail* –

The legendary Chalice Christ used at the Last Supper.

And he winds up having to rescue his *father* – played by Sean *Connery*

Who stumbled into trouble searching for the Holy Grail *ahead* of his son.

They *both* loved *antiquity*.

But *Indiana* was – as St. *Paul* described today –

Walking the way of the *flesh*.

Jones didn't particularly *believe* in the legendary power of the grail to offer one eternal life.

He just appreciated things for their *fleshy* value –

Something *rare* that others *prized* – and *he* wanted the wealth and honor of finding the grail.

His *father* – *Henry* –

Was *also* in pursuit of the Grail.

But *Henry* walked the way of the *Spirit*.

He was seeking contact with the Spirit of *God* through that Grail.

His motivation was *not* fleshy – it was the desire to be *touched* by God.

My friends,

We *all* have the desire for *God* – *etched* upon our *fleshy hearts*.

It's our fundamental *thirst*.

And – *my* – how we like to drink from our *false* thirsts –

Those thirsts of the *flesh* that will only pass away –

And even begin to *rot* – and have a *stench* –

As did the body of *Lazarus* in that *tomb*.

In this *amazing* Gospel –

John reveals one of the *last* signs of Christ's *glorious* identity –

The eternal Son of God – who said *I AM the Resurrection and the Life* –

The God who revealed Himself *personally* to Moses as *I AM – I AM WHO AM*.

Our existence is but an *expression* – a *product* of God Who is BEING... *itself*.

That is why we *thirst* for Him –

He *allowed* Himself to thirst for *us* –

Creating us from the thirst of His *love*.

But Adam and Eve – and *all* humanity – turned *away* from the *breath* of God that made them –

We chase after a *false* thirsts –

A thirst of the *flesh* –

A thirst to make a piece of *fruit* their idol –

A thirst to *use* that fruit to make *ourselves* idols.

Now in *religion-speak*,

People *mistakenly limit* the phrase, *sins of the flesh*,

To *sexual* desire –

In more *polite* language: *carnal* desire.

But *carnal* is *fleshy* –

Including *all* our lusts for created goods.

Take *this* example in a *common* expression...

I used to live to *eat* –

Rather than eat to *live*.

We *all* are offered the gifts of the physical world to help us *enjoy* life.

If we live to *eat* – we're walking the way of the *flesh*.

The *food* becomes our god,

Yet it *never* satisfies [witness my 400lbs]...

The *fleshy* goods of the world are meant to be used to a *higher* purpose –

To live a life with hearts directed to our *true* thirst –

For the God who thirsts for *us* – and for our *true satisfaction* with Him.

The one who eats to *live* is walking the way of the *Spirit*.

Otherwise, life itself can become a tomb –

Long before there's a *stench*.

Jesus *loved* Martha, Mary, and *Lazarus* –

They were *personal* friends –

His *hangout* – where He could *rest*.

Bethany was just between the Judean desert and *Jerusalem*.

After a *long* journey from *Galilee*,

He'd *stay* there,

Before getting up the strength to face His *crucifiers* in *Jerusalem* –

Where He *knew* He would offer His life on the *Cross*.

But He *also* knew that *through* this *same* cross *we* gain the *bridge* to *true* life –

A life that will never *die*, and *rot*, and have a *stench*;

A life no longer *harassed* by *false* thirsts – our *fleshy* thirsts;

A life of drinking *deeply* the eternal love of God.

So, Jesus *allowed* His *dearest* friend – *Lazarus* – to *die*.

As we *all* shall die one day.

Even though it was as if *Jesus* had died *with* Him –

In His *deep* sorrow, pain, and *tears* over the apparent *loss* of this loved one.

Twice in this Gospel it says that Jesus was *perturbed* – and *deeply troubled*.

The *English loses* some of the deeper *flavor* of what's being *said*.

This is *God* – who out of a *deep* love –

Enters *into* our fleshy existence.

And so the *Spirit* of God *snorts!*

Perturbed can be more *accurately* translated as: His spirit *snorted!*

It is the *same* breath of God that breathed us into *creation* –

The breath of God breathing His *name* at the burning bush: I AM – YHWH.

The breath of God that breathed its *last* on that *cross* – before rising to the Father in Heaven.

And the *same* breath of God *sealed* into our hearts at our *baptism*.

It *pains* Jesus to see us in *pain* –

It *pains* Him that we seem to be *bound* to the suffering and death that *sin* introduced to the world.

And it's this *sin* that Christ allows to be laid *upon* Himself –

These sins to be *nailed* to the cross along with His *own* flesh.

Jesus *unties* us from our burial bands.

He pulls *away* the veil of *death* so we may *see* our life with Him.

Jesus Wept for our *entombment* to our *flesh* –

Subjugated to the power of sin and death.

But God *penetrates* our *fleshiness* –

So that we *too* may *rise* –

With Him – as *He* has risen from the tomb on Easter.

The whole *point* of the Gospel today is to *move* us to *belief* –

That Jesus *is* the Resurrection and the Life;

That *His* spirit – *incarnate* in those who *believe* –

Will free *us* from *our* tombs –

The tombs of *fear*, and *doubt*, and *slavish lusts*, and *despair*.

It's *interesting* –

Easy to miss!

Jesus prays to the Father with *faith* that the Father *always* listens.

And He prays that *we* may believe;

He *speaks to us* when He says:

*If you **believe** – you will **see** the glory of God.*

We like to say: *Seeing is believing.*

But *Jesus* says: *Believing is seeing.*

Ask the Father that we may see with the eyes of the *heart* –

The eyes of *Jesus* –

Who can *see* in our lowly *flesh* – *fertile* soil for the *life-giving* Spirit of *God*.

To *believe* is *not* just a matter of the *intellect* – I *believe* in the theory of relativity.

It's a matter of the *heart* – to *accept* – in the *depth* of our hearts – our *souls* –

Our fundamental *identity* – as *God's beloved* --

That not even *death* can keep us apart.

Living by this belief changes *everything*.

We begin to *see* life *differently*. *We* see a love which conquers *all*.

And *that* is what makes *all* the difference.

Believing is *seeing* a *light* from amidst the darkness;

Believing is *seeing Hope* when faced with the threat of despair;

Believing is *seeing Love* as the way through strife;

Believing is seeing with eyes and hearts of *Faith* –

Like the *child* who is sick, or injured, or distressed –

Yet *trusts...* with *conviction* in his mother who says: *It's gonna be all right!*

Believing is *seeing* the call to *compassion* when finding a stranger in *need*;

Believing is seeing the *resurrection and the life* even when death looms *large* over us.

Indiana Jones – at the *climax* of the quest for the Holy Grail –

He had to take a leap of *faith* –

Many *obstacles* were in place to keep those *without* faith from reaching the grail.

The *last* obstacle was the great *abyss* at a cliff's *edge* –

Separating Indiana from the cave on the other *side* that *contained* the *cup*.

The *only* way across was to take a leap of *faith* –

And out of *love* for His father, who would *die* without drinking from the chalice –

He *stepped out* – into thin *air* –

Into the *height* of the *abyss* – risking that he should *plummet* to his *death*.

Yet his faith found solid *ground*.

A *bridge* that he could not *see* was there.

He *believed* – *then* he saw.

My friends,

May *we* believe –

Surrender our *hearts* –

To *our* bridge into eternal life – *especially* when faced with plummeting into the abyss

Of life's struggles.

Believe – and we *shall* see our dear Jesus Christ – Jesus who *weeps* in *every one* of our tears.

Jesus who has *shown* us:

I AM the resurrection and the life.

*Whoever **believes** in me, even if he **dies** – will **live**!*

*And everyone who **lives** and **believes** in me will **never** die.*