

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...

“Go to the ant, o sluggard, observe her ways and be wise” Proverbs 6:6

“Now learn the parable from the fig tree even so you too when you see these things happening recognize that he is near right at the door.” Mark 13:28-29

We are told in 1 Corinthians 13 that we see dimly and as through a mirror. I think often of the words that are on the passenger side mirror of my car that say “Objects in mirror may be closer than they appear.” Though we hear of wars in foreign lands and have great concern for our borders, we can take a warning from what we can see that perhaps the battles and the issues are closer than we may want to know. Because we are all designed with “blind spots” (areas in our life that we do not see or do not see clearly) we are all subject to learning from sources outside of ourselves. Proverbs 27:17 says “Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” One man helps another man see his blind spots, cover his vulnerability and strengthen his weaknesses. Psalm 106:43 speaks about how God’s people provoked Him to wrath and He gave them over to judgment and into the hand of the nations and let them rule over them. He used other nations to mirror to them their own rebellious and stubborn ways. 1 Peter 4:17 tells us that judgment begins with the house of God. God often uses the things of the world to reflect back to the church the church’s blind spots. Many social ills are an extension of weakened Christian values. The abortion epidemic often mirrors the Christian’s lack of love for children, the high divorce rate reflects an emptiness and lack of fulfillment in Christian marriages, and religious fanaticism often mirrors Christian passivity.

The book of James further makes the distinction between a hearer and a doer by the one who looks into a mirror and walks away and forgets what kind of person he was (James 1:22, 27). When an Israelite came to either the temple or the tabernacle to seek the favor of God, the first item they would face was a bronze laver, a large container holding water for purification. However the outside of this container was covered with mirrors, the first person therefore that they saw in coming to God was themselves. Because He loved them and wanted to bless them the first thing that needed to be dealt with was their own filth. If a person looked and saw themselves with much dirt and walked away they might believe that they were clean and presentable, but everyone else would know that their filth remained. This person would typify one who is a hearer but not a doer.

For a person to qualify as a doer, he is one who would see himself and see at the very onset his need for washing and cleansing. II Corinthians 3:18 says “But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory just as from the Lord the Spirit.” Just like the Israelite, when we approach the glory of the Lord and are confronted with our own shortcomings and failings we have a choice. We can turn and go back, live in denial and harden our heart and justify our filth, or we can continue toward the place and face of God, being cleansed and renewed as we go. I John 3:2-3 makes this even clearer. “Beloved, now we are children of God and it has not appeared as yet what we will be, we know that when He appears we will be like Him because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself just as He is pure.” To see Him is to become like Him.

Perhaps this is why our image of Him is still dim and seen through a mirror, for we are not yet ready to be transformed until the day we enter into His presence or until He comes to take us home. The remedy for seeing ourselves and our filth is to move more and more into Him. It is through His light that our sins are absolutely absorbed. The truth is clear: we become our focus. Matthew 6:24 says that “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.” When our focus is on ourselves we despise the work of God. When our focus is on Him we hate everything that compromises our relationship with Him.

When the sloth focuses on the hardships and the difficulties, even seven men who mirror his blind spot cannot get him to face his reality. The sloth has become dull and slow, enslaved and immobilized. In working with a horse it is vital that the horse learn to hear and respond to the trainer’s presence, his purpose and also his pressure. He must hear and respond correctly to the aides (verbal, rein, leg and seat aides), in so doing, he will become fully alive, fully yielded, and eventually fully harnessed. However, waking up the passive horse can often be a disaster. We see dimly, and when God uses things in our lives to wake us up, to cause us to see more clearly, we too often react with anger and self righteousness.

While we are quick to think that Al Qaeda is our enemy and that political agenda would be our resolve. We must realize that our battle is far closer than we think, for our mirror tells us that our battle is first in our heart, and secondly in our relationships. Our victory over fear and anger and bitterness and lust has to do with the focus of our eyes, for surely every point of contention involves pride. The Bible tells us clearly that we are to look to Jesus who is the author and perfecter of our faith, and when we see the dirt of our hearts we are to go further into His very presence. Psalm 121 in addition to many others impresses us with the need to set our eyes upon God. Not just looking to the heavens, not just looking to the hills, not just looking to men and women who have resources, but to God Himself, the Maker of heaven and earth, the One who never sleeps nor slumbers, the One who keeps our soul, the one who delivers us and watches our going out and our coming in from this time forth and forevermore. To God be the glory! Today as you see yourself through the mirror of others you work with, live with, what does it tell you about the state of your heart? Be careful, the real problem may be closer than you think!

-Lew Sterrett