



REFLECTIONS

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... Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31-32

Hidden Wounds

Fresh from the war that left him maimed for life, Samuel stood before a small group of men to tell his story. His wounds could not be hidden. His disfigured face told of flames that flashed from the bomb that exploded beneath the military vehicle that carried him. Little remained of his ears, and scars stretched his flesh so tightly across his face that any semblance of smile he felt could never be seen. He even had to speak as through clinched teeth. But there he stood bearing it all to the group of men sitting before him. They had wounds too but none had courage to share them.

Life inflicts wounds on all of us. No one is immune. Some wounds are but soft blemishes to vanity. Others more severe are inflicted by loss of loved ones, relationships broken, approvals never granted, trusts violated, failures undiscovered, forgiveness not received. These pains do not pass easily, so we try to hide them all.

Some wounds are veiled to conceal our shame. Some are hidden to protect relationships we want to keep. Some are scars from wars fought that rekindle pain at the sight of them. Even from ourselves some remain hidden to avoid reliving the sting that placed them there.

Hidden wounds are among the burdens we carry through our lives. They sometimes change who we are or become barriers to who we hope to be. They reshape the way we live our lives. I wonder if hidden wounds caused my uncle to live as more than he was or ever could be. I wonder if scars unhealed had something to do with the estrangement of my aunt from her only child. And I wonder if the way I live my life is shaped by wounds I harbor deep in my soul—the ones I can't reveal even to me. And I wonder what life would be like if I could bring myself to expose them all.

That is a choice Samuel doesn't have. His wounds are there for all to see. But he says he wouldn't change a thing. Given a second chance he would not remove a one of them. And there is a lesson in that. His wounds are a part of who he has become. They are his truth. And because his wounds go unhidden, the burden of them is removed.

And he is free.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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