

REFLECTIONS

September 23, 2007

**"Woe to you, teachers of the law and
Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the
kingdom of heaven in men's faces**

Matthew 23:13

Passing Through School Zones

Recently I passed through a school zone. I obeyed the signal that warned of the 20 mile an hour speed limit. Often I find a patrolman on the other end enforcing the limit as if the purpose of the law was to punish the disobedient and collect a fine. But school zones are but one place where speed limits are imposed. Officers are on duty in other places too enforcing our speeding indiscretions.

Wherever I am, I usually find myself driving at the top permissible speed. And sometimes I drive above the allowable limit but only enough to stay under the tolerance that most officers enforce. My focus on evading the enforcers causes me to lose sight that the laws are not about obedience or assessing fines. School zones are marked as a caution to protect the safety of someone's beloved child—maybe yours or mine. And when we go speeding through a neighborhood or make haste down a busy highway, the chief concern should be the wellbeing of those around us, not evading a law enforcer.

It is the spirit of the law that should be our concern; and the spirit behind speed limits, when expressed in the simplest form, is really about loving our neighbor. It is about one of the two great commands that Jesus recalled for us. Remember, He said, **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."** (Matt 22:37-40 NIV)

Someone has explained that the Ten Commandments were not written to *establish* sin. They were written to *reveal* it. Speed limits are not written to establish our love for our fellow man. They are written to reveal when we don't care. If we are to love our neighbor, we must slow down to do it.

Now that principle sounds like a life message too. All too often we live our lives beyond the suggested speed and we lose sight of what life is all about. The greatest command is to love the Lord our God. There is no patrolman waiting to enforce it,

But we must slow down to do it.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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