



REFLECTIONS

October 11, 2015, Refreshed for the Archives of May 30, 2010

“You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.”

John 8:15

Casting Stones

It's easy to blame Peter. After all he denied Jesus three times. Not that his admission would have changed the fate of the leader he had followed for three years, but it would have set an example for standing up for ones' friends when they are in need, for standing up for ones' beliefs when they are under attack, and for keeping ones' promises in the face of dreadful consequences. But Peter didn't set those examples. And we blame him for it.

It's also easy to blame the Pharisees. They were so rigid with their rules. They set them to ensure that the law was honored but the rules they made offered no latitude in the compliance to them. Pharisees self-righteously boasted of their obedience to the rules. “O Lord, I am glad I am not like these,” they would pray. And we blame them for hypocrisy.

And shame on Saul. Before his Damascus road experience and he changed his name to Paul, he stood and watched approvingly as the crowds wrongfully stoned Stephen to death. It was as if he was the sole judge of right and wrong and his mind was closed to other possibilities. And we blame him for allowing a wrong to be done.

Even our creeds cite Pontius Pilot for being weak to the evil ways of the world as if the rest of us stand up to them each day. Our blame is not misplaced. Peter broke his promise, the Pharisees were self-righteous, Paul was set in his ways, and Pontius Pilot was weak to the ways of the world. But I am in position to neither judge them nor indict anyone who does. Rather, I must but look at myself, for I know tomorrow someone will set an example I do not like, violate a rule I try to obey, express a belief I do not share, and yield to the evil ways of the world. And I will find myself casting stones at them all.

Jesus knew I would. That's why He said, **"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?"** (Matt 7:3-4)

Casting stones—perhaps that is what I have done here; yet I find myself standing in the very path of the stones I have thrown. I write this not as an indictment of any who might read it, but in prayerful hope that the stones will awaken me to understand the failings of those around me, to forgive when wrong is done, and for strength to withstand the evil ways of the world when they entice me. And to always remember...

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone..." (John 8:7 KJV)

“You are the light of the world.”

Richard +

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