

WEDNESDAY 05 October 2022 "My Mirror?" (Gal. 6:3-10)

Hello, my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

Mirrors are both wonderful friends and terrible enemies, aren't they? Perhaps you have bright lights around some of your mirrors, why? Here's an important question we all must face... *do we really want the mirrors, into which we look, to show us the truth about ourselves, or would we prefer a filter, a positive distortion of our reality?*

We've spent the last three weeks visiting the city of Syrian Antioch, about the year 48ad, and specifically a little house where the apostle Paul is writing his first letter. Over the next several years Paul would write many more, but he is writing this one primarily to the Gentile Christians living in the region of what is today central Turkey, where Paul and Barnabas had spent almost two years bringing the story of Jesus Christ and His Gospel to people who mostly had never heard of Jesus. But word has come to Paul that many of those who believed Paul's message and trusted in Jesus are having second thoughts and some are turning away, because of some false teaching which has come and distorted the truth which they had received.

Paul is now in his sixth and final chapter and is calling his readers to look into their mirrors with honesty. ***"If anyone thinks they are something when they are nothing, they deceive themselves. Each person should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves, without comparing themselves to somebody else, for each person should carry their own load in life."*** (Gal. 6:3-5) I wonder how this stirs your heart and mind, my friends?

Look around your extended family, your coworkers, the people in your neighborhood, your friends. *Do you see anyone who has an elevated view of themselves? Might we call it pride or arrogance?* How does that distorted self-perspective affect their relationships with you and other people? How does it affect their work ethic, their willingness to serve and help other people? When they are speaking do you hear them using the word "I" or "me" a great deal? Are you attracted to a prideful, arrogant, self-focused person or do you want to keep your distance from them?

Some years later, when Paul was writing another of his letters, the one we know as Philippians, Paul writes: ***"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourself. Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others. Your attitudes should be the same as Christ Jesus: 'Who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but making Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient, even to death on a cross!'"*** (Phil. 2:3-8) If ever there was anyone who had the right to be arrogant and prideful it was God the Son who came to earth taking on human flesh, do you agree? God incarnate.

Yet, Jesus modeled humility so well for us! *In both of these letters Paul calls us to emulate Jesus as humble people in a world with way too many prideful people.*

Paul continued with his letter to the Galatians: "***Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The person who sows to please their sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the person who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers.***" (Gal. 6:7-10) Oh my friends, what do you think about that powerful yet brief statement: **'God cannot be mocked.'**?

All around us, no matter where you live, I'm sure you see evidence of people mocking God. And does it appear God is not doing anything about it? God is not judging those people, nor retaliating against them? May I urge you to see that God is patient, God is giving them time to see the error of their ways and repent, according to 2 Peter 3:9. May I also remind us of this Scripture truth: "***Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.***" (Heb. 4:13) *Make no mistake about it my friends, there will be a day of reckoning for every person, regarding everything in their lifetime, as we will each and all stand before Holy, Almighty, all-knowing God, the righteous Judge.*

I'm sure you noticed Paul's emphasis on the powerful truth that we each will reap what we sow. While Paul is using a farming metaphor, we don't need to be farmers to understand it do we? *Our attitudes, our words, our choices, our behavior all affect other people, and the response of those people is just some of the harvest Paul is talking about.* So, I wonder what you see my friends as we each look at how people respond to us? Is God showing us it would be wise for us to evaluate what and how we sow and what we are reaping? Would some changes be wise and make a difference?

Don't you love Paul's challenge to not grow weary in **'doing good'**? *Paul means that God's people, living under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, are always on the lookout for how they can help other people.* I wonder what that looks like where you live and in your life in every season? Shoveling your neighbor's driveway from snow in the winter, or raking the fallen leaves on the property of an elderly friend, or cooking a meal for a family with a mom in the hospital, or helping respond to community needs in a storm? *Oh, my what a difference God's people can make in our very needy world, would you agree?*

I think it's very likely Paul paused right here, and once again opened the little door to his house to look out at the busy streets of Syrian Antioch in the first century. *So many needs of every kind! So few people with a generous, humble spirit who are looking to be helpful to other people.* I wonder what it looks like to you as you walk through your city my friends. What are the needs of the elderly, the disadvantaged, the children, the refugees who've moved to your town from far away?

May I ask us to take some time right now to ask Jesus to help us see our cities as He sees them? What would it be like to take a stroll with Jesus through the streets of your town, and then sit with Jesus in the classrooms of the schools in your town, and then spend a few moments in the police department of your town or the city hall of your town? **What would Jesus see and how would Jesus help you and me see some new ways we could serve and make a positive difference in our towns these days?** And here's an ancient song of hope, sung by a young girl, to help us consider how to apply what Paul wrote, to our lives and our towns...

Today's Scripture is Galatians 6:3-10.