



The Southeast Sower

Southeast Church of Christ

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“A Mirror For The Soul”

(Part II)

By

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“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does,”
-(James 1:22-25).

In last month’s article we considered James illustration of those who are hearers of God’s word and not doers. James tells us that they are like one who looks into a mirror and beholds their appearance, but who is not impacted and transformed by the reality of that image enough for it to have a lasting effect after walking away. The application for us to consider is that as a mirror reveals the spots and blemishes of our physical

appearance, so the word of God reveals the spots and blemishes of our spiritual appearance. God’s word is truly a mirror for our soul. Yet it is more keen, insightful, and penetrating than any earthly mirror. Therefore, we must heed God’s word carefully as it reveals to us three things that are necessary for us to understand if our souls are going to be spiritually presentable in God’s sight. God’s word reveals to us *what we are in His sight, what we can be by His grace, and what we will be in His judgement.*

First of all, when we look into the mirror of God’s word it reveals to us what we are in God’s sight. The book of Genesis tells us of all the things God created on this earth, that in His sight we are His special creation, made in His image. *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”*
²⁷ *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God*

The Southeast
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SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study: 10:00 am

Worship: 10:50 am

6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 pm

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He created him; male and female He created them.” (Gen. 1:26-27). He created man’s body from the dust of the ground, and gave him a living soul (Gen. 2:7). Yet man, even as God’s special creation, made in His image as a spiritual living soul, fell short of God’s glory by transgressing His word causing sin to enter into the world. *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered*

the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned”, (Rom. 5:12). And, while Adam and Eve may have been the first to fall into sin, we are no less transgressors for the apostle Paul also states in Rom. 3:23 that, *“All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”* The consequence of that sin is death (Rom.6:23).

However, if we gaze into the mirror of God’s word, see the blemish of sin on our souls, the result of which is death, and we deny the image revealed to us then we are merely deceiving ourselves. John tells us this very thing in I John 1:8, *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* If we are willing to accept our physical image as it is revealed to us in an earthly mirror, how much more then should we be willing to accept our spiritual image as it is revealed to us in the mirror of God’s word?

Let us consider some examples in the Bible of those who sinned, their reactions and consequences.

Consider Moses in Numbers 20:1-13. The Israelites murmured and contended with Moses and Aaron over being in the wilderness with no water. Moses and Aaron went to

the door of the tabernacle and fell on their faces seeking divine help from God. In verse 8 Moses was commanded by God to speak to the rock before the people, and water would come forth. But Moses gathered the people together and violated God’s word, glorifying himself in front of the whole congregation while striking the rock. If we hold Moses’ actions up to the mirror of God’s word to him we see sin reflected back. The consequence of that sin was that Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land. Deut. 32:49-52 describes the scene of Moses on Mt. Nebo looking over into the promised land knowing he could not enter. While Moses was standing there gazing over at the land flowing with “milk and honey”, I have often wondered what he was thinking. I wonder if the one thing he was thinking about was the one thing that kept him from that land he had worked so hard to lead the Israelites to - his sin in the wilderness.

Consider the apostle Peter in Luke 22. Peter went from a lowly fisherman to being an apostle, hearing Christ’s teaching on a regular basis, witnessing miracles and Christ’s transfiguration, to even walking on water with Christ (for a time). And now, Jesus warned Peter that he would deny Him

three times, (Luke 22:31-34). Peter protested that he would follow Christ to prison or death rather than ever deny Him. However, we read that Peter denied Christ three times just as surely as Christ had said. Luke writes in 22:60-62, *“Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times’. So Peter went out and wept bitterly.”* If we hold Peter’s words and actions up to the mirror of Christ’s words to him we see sin reflected back. Can you imagine how Peter felt when Christ turned to look directly at him upon the third denial? Or how Christ felt? What a look that must have been, for Peter fled from it and wept bitterly. Perhaps we would sin less if we imagined that same look from Christ when we sin.

While these examples are helpful to consider, we must remember that we do not look into a mirror to see the image of others, but rather the image of ourselves. We must examine our own lives as we gaze into the mirror of God’s word, accept the image we see, and set about to correct it in order for our souls to be spiritually presentable to God, our Creator. (Cont. in Part III)