



Food for Thought:

“Mirror, Mirror, on the wall...”

*2 Samuel 12:1-9. ~*

What is the first thing you do when you get up in the morning? Whatever it is, you probably do the same thing the same way every day because we humans are creatures of habit. Each of us have our own individualized routines that get us going. Maybe you need a cup of coffee to make you function or perhaps you need to make the bed to get you started. Me, I need to jump into the shower before I can stand to do anything else.

But some part of everyone’s morning ritual is coming face to face with themselves in a mirror. And, if I had to guess, I would say that that first look is a rude awakening. Our eyes probably have that bleary, dazed look; our hair might be sticking out in strange places, and our breath would probably peel paint and cause people to faint.

Facing a mirror first thing in the morning is NOT a pleasant experience. Mirrors are very honest little things. They don’t compromise. They don’t gloss over defects or tell us that we are better-looking than we really are. In fact, they show us every wart, wrinkle, gray hair and zit. And, the better the mirror, the more flaws we see.

So why then do we have mirrors in our bathrooms and bedrooms? Well, because as unpleasant as it may be to confront our own faces first thing in the morning, we know that if we don’t make some adjustments, the rest of the world is going to see that morning face that just frightened us! I think that we figure it is better for us to “face the truth” early so we can make ourselves presentable for the rest of the world.

I was listening to Turning Point the other night and heard Dr. David Jeremiah tell a story about King David and how he had a painful mirror experience. That story, chronicled in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, clearly describes what I think God was trying to tell me to write about this month, mirrors. But not all mirrors are shiny, reflective devices. Although we look at ourselves in a mirror several times a day, we can also see our reflections in the faces and reactions of others and that is what happened to King David.

There are mirrors in the bathroom that say that the make-up looks good, the hair is in place, or this tie goes with that shirt; a mirror in the gym that tells us that we are really making progress – or that we still have a long way to go. But beyond the physical reflections of mirrors on the wall, we also see our reflections in others: a mirror of a child who did something wrong that catches his mother’s reaction to the disappointment; the mirror at school that says ‘you really look cool in that new outfit’ only to hear other students laughing at you; the mirror of disapproval from your spouse for something you said or did; the mirror of a boss who tells you ‘you don’t measure up;’ or the mirror of a coach or teacher that said you are dumb or lazy.

The problem is not that the world judges us just as harshly as that image that we see reflected back at us every morning; it is that we don’t always want to accept those reflections because it usually isn’t what we want to see or hear.

And as a Christ-followers, I think that when we look into a mirror, we should be able to see an image that goes beyond our looks. We should be able to see an image that reflects God’s grace and love. But it doesn’t. Too often, we read about loving God and others and hear about God’s plans for our lives, but then

we fail to act on what we hear. Just like the Evil Queen in the Snow-White fable, we fail to allow those truths to transform our lives and image. That alone is enough to depress any Christian.

Let's go back to the story of King David in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel and what happened to him when he met Bathsheba. He had lied, cheated and broken almost all of the 10 Commandments, and he thought he had everyone fooled until his mirror showed up. It wasn't a reflective piece of glass that convicted him, it was a man named Nathan. This bold prophet told David a story about how a rich and powerful man took the one precious thing in a poor man's life—his little lamb that was like a daughter to him—and killed it because the rich man wasn't willing to use up his own livestock to feed a guest.

David was outraged by the injustice of this story and the abuse of power and authority that the rich man used against this poor man. David named the man's sin and the proper punishment for it.

Then Nathan stood before David, and like a mirror he said, "YOU ARE THAT MAN!"

The naked truth stared David in the face. There is one word for this moment - BUSTED!

David was faced with an important decision in that moment. Which reflection would he see the next time he looked in the mirror? Would he see himself as the entitled King, deflect this accusation, kill Nathan to suppress the truth, and continue to believe his distorted image of himself? Or, would he accept the truth, confess his wrongs, and accept whatever consequences would come from his actions?

As the Templar Knight said in the movie *'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade'*, *"He chose wisely."*

In his letters in the New Testament, James said that God's Word is like a mirror that shows us the truth about ourselves (James 1:22-25.) He reminds us that anyone who hears the Word, but doesn't follow it, is like a person who looks in the mirror and sees that they need to wash their face and brush their hair, but then doesn't fix anything and walks away.

The word of God becomes a mirror that the Holy Spirit uses to enable us to see ourselves as we really are. It is not like a mirror. It is a mirror. When we investigate God's word, the view we get back is HOW GOD SEES US not how our friends see us or how we see ourselves. It is how God sees us!

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:5, Paul urges each of us to examine whether their own relationship with God is real - Pastor asks us this question every time that we take communion. It is not good enough if other people consider us to be genuine **Christians**. He is asking, "What are we seeing from the inside?" Does the inside match the outside? We might as well be saying "Mirror, mirror on the wall, I am a Christian, aren't I?" But is it by word or deed?

We need people to be mirrors in our lives like Nathan was to King David. Mirrors that are willing to tell us the truth about who and what we are and how we are treating, or mistreating others. Then, we need to have the courage to be like David and own up to our mistakes, make amends, and accept the consequences with humility and honor. We also need to be a Nathan to others and

offer them that same insight with love, support, and encouragement that they gave us.

Oftentimes people come to church and the mirror of the Word shows them something they don't like, and they get mad at the mirror, or at the church, or at anyone holding a mirror.

Just about every Pastor can tell you a story of a conversation they had with a churchgoer after a service about how they seemed to be talking specifically at them during his sermon. Sometimes they agreed with the awakening, but some voiced their disapproval a little too emphatically because they thought that their circumstance wasn't meant for the whole church to hear. The Pastors usually told them that God help him put their message together and that perhaps it was God who was convicting them of something if it struck that big of a chord with them. Then when the Pastors were re-telling the story to their wives or another Pastor, they almost always made a comment along the lines that 'God hit a little too close to the mark on that one' don't you think?

Mirror, Mirror! You never know who is watching!!