

The Art of Being Yourself: Mirror, Mirror

By Ken Wilson, June 17-18 2007

We have to look outside ourselves to see ourselves, literally. It is physically impossible to see our own face directly. We need a mirror.

John 1: 35-39 The Call of the First Disciples

John 1: 40-42 First Thing Peter Sees in Jesus: True Self

"Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter)." (Jn. 1: 40-42)

- + Cephas-Peter not personal names at that time in history
- + Original hearers would have heard, "Rock" as in stone.
- + Original readers of John, familiar with gospel of Mark
- + Gospel of Mark, sourced by Peter, emphasizes his hot-cold personality
- + Gospel of Mark refers to Peter as "Simon, bar Jonas [son of Jonah]
- + Jonah, the original flip-flopper

Jesus says "You are Simon son of flip flop, but you will be called, Rock, Reliable, Faithful to a Fault."

Luke 5: 1-11 Luke's Account of First Epic Jesus-Peter Encounter

- + Jesus borrows Peter's boat after long night's futile fishing
- + To pay rental, tells Peter where to let nets down for big catch
- + Peter knows lake better than Jesus, refuses; Jesus insists; Peter complies
- + Amazing catch ensues; Peter stunned, says "Get away, I'm a sinful man!"
- + John 1 and Luke 5: Commentary on Each Other? Something in Simon-Peter said, No Way!" when Jesus reflected the Rock he saw in Simon?

James 1: 23-25 The Mirror That Long-Looked-Into Confers Liberty

- + Jesus is the WORD. This WORD is also the mirror we look into to discover our true selves.
- + Looking in the mirror isn't just a passive thing. It leads to our DOING the things we see our true self-made to do.
- + Like Peter found out, it's going to take a while. We start off something less than what we really are; at times it's hard to believe that the person Jesus sees in us is the real us after all. But faithfulness to Jesus (if not faithfulness to ourselves) says: keep looking in the mirror. Look intently. Look long and hard. Until the image you see there comes to pass.

Now return to John 1 and see it played out with Nathaniel:

John 1: 43-51 Nathaniel Meets His Match

- + Nathaniel presents as savvy-crafty
- + Jesus sees in him, "A true Israelite, in whom there is no guile"
- + Ancestral overtones: founding father of Israel known for deceit
- + Personal identity isn't strictly individual: also familial
- + We may not share the guilt of our ancestors, but we may feel that we carry their shame, pain, weight; their faults our destiny?
- + Jesus is touching Nathaniel at the level of ancestral identity
- + Personal redemption ripples in all directions: future (and past?)
- + Rabbi, you are the King of Israel! When someone sees something in you that no one else has been able to reflect back to you, it endears them to you.
- + To be known is to be loved. And to be loved is to love in return and reveal what you see in the Beloved.

Notice: Jesus doesn't begin by inveighing against their sin.

In book of Romans, Paul lays out the gospel systematically. This approach to telling the gospel is sometimes called "The Romans Road."

Primary concern of letter to Romans: relations between Jew & Gentile; Paul needed to convince Jew & Gentile believers that they shared same condition: the human condition, a.k.a the sin condition

"Romans Road" an inspired-legitimate way to tell gospel, but not the only way. "Capernaum Road" another way to tell the gospel (the way Jesus told it to Peter and Nathaniel, starting with the true self he saw in them)

Most of us can already smell the garbage. We may be all mixed up about where the smell is coming from, but we know there's a smell.

What we need is to know what's buried beneath the garbage. Then we're inspired to get rid of the garbage.

For Practice in Small Group: take as many weeks as there are group participants who are willing; let each person tell their life story to the group.

Group Ground Rules: 1) What's shared in the group, stays there; 2) No unsolicited advice giving; 3) Commit to lift each other's burdens in prayer

Listen carefully to the life story that is shared in the group. Ask for spiritual eyes to see what Jesus is doing in the life of the person sharing; look for indications of the true self that Jesus sees in the person sharing. With humility and permission,

and only if it would be encouraging, share what it is you see of the true-emerging self of the person who shares.