

Compassion

(from the last millennium – somewhere in the nineties)

Another one of those weeks where I question my ability to be a parent. What sowed the seeds of doubt was another one of those patience losing episodes. I think this one had to do with finding 'stuff' laying around the house. I tried to talk this one out with the kids.

I thought I was speaking about being caring, thoughtful, giving. What I ended up doing was pointing out how they weren't. I tried to rescue myself as they scrambled for cover, attempting their defense by pointing out what they were doing right, and what I was doing wrong. I suggested we focus not on what we've done, but on what we can do, to make a better home. They countered with.... "Geese Dad, you want us to be perfect." On first examination this isn't a bad goal, since even the Master Himself encourages us to "be perfect". But my children were not talking about goals. I think what they really meant is that I wasn't happy with them because they weren't perfect.

Unfortunately, instead of listening to them, I was more concerned with getting my point across, and getting my children to think more like an adult in terms of responsibility. Needless to say, the discussion headed down hill, and left itself dangling, with little resolution and discouraged children.

Several thousand miles in the air over a couple of days provides more than jet lag. It allows for lots of reflection. This time, I went through some things written down long ago, some by me, some by people lots older than me. For hours I poured through these writings. It really bothered me, the way my kids and I left each other. I'd definitely taken the wrong approach. Perhaps I saw the things in them that were deficient in me. I thought about how they felt I was unhappy with them. I saw this from their point. It cut me to the bone.

In the hours hurtling through space at six hundred miles an hour, two images from the Keeper of all Wisdom, softly set themselves before me and I gazed at them. The first were words from Himself. He said, "Be merciful. Just as your Father is merciful. Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return, be measured out to you." You can find these words in Luke, chapter six, verses thirty-six through thirty-eight.

The second image I found in John, chapter eight, versus one through eleven. You can read the story if you want, the image is very graphic since it deals with people judging someone by stoning them to death. But this isn't about the story, it's about what The Master says after, to the potential victim, who He saved from the stoning. He says, "Then neither will I judge you. Go and sin no more."

Oh how I wish I could go and sin no more. This seems to me a most powerful statement. The great compassion of Jesus, indeed Compassion It's very Self. In It's original form It seems to fill that event, pushing out all those who have no compassion, until there is only Compassion Itself, and the one in need of it. If only I could remember this lesson when I am ready to accuse my children of anything. To encounter Compassion and be washed in Its grace. Love defined in a human moment. Go and sin no more.

So I found what I was missing. Compassion. I also realized that getting children to see things from an adult point of view was pretty stupid. After all, they are children.

Is there anything more precious?

"Until you become as one of these, you will not enter into My Kingdom."