



“Mirror Tell Me”
2 Corinthians 13:5-7
Westport Christian Church
February 21, 2010

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless indeed you fail the test? But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test. Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved. (2 Cor 13:5-7NASU)

In the story of Snow White, the queen would stand before a mirror and say, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the fairest of them all?” Now, if you remember that story everything was great until the day when the mirror spoke the truth which the queen did not like.

Have you ever had to take a self evaluation examine? Did you enjoy it? I remember the first one that I had to take, I didn’t enjoy it. I mean lets face it, it is hard to evaluate yourself. There are a few reasons it is hard. It’s hard to be honest with our self because we are not happy with who we are. It’s hard to be honest with our self because we often want to be like someone else instead of being who we are and therefore we aren’t really honest. It’s hard to be honest with our self because often we don’t like people like who we are.

In a blog written by Scott H. Young, he writes, “Unfortunately, honest self-evaluation is one of the hardest skills to master. People tend to be self-serving in their thoughts. For most people, self-reflection involves

looking into a carnival mirror, with all the information warped and distorted until it barely resembles reality.” (Scott H. Young-Get More From Life)

In our text today, Paul was telling the Christian in Corinth to examine themselves. No doubt many of the problems in the church at Corinth were caused by people who professed to be saved, but who had never repented and trusted Jesus Christ. Our churches are filled with such people today. In the King James, Paul called such people reprobate, which means “counterfeit, discredited after a test.”

Socrates said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

It is so easy to always look at someone else and know what they need to fix or remove. Let me give you an illustration. Ronda had been working hard at getting things ready for Ryan and Amanda. She would go upstairs and pack things away and then have me move them to the barn or over in the attic. After a few trips, I began to inform my wife how she needed to remove some items out of her life. I began asking, “what’s in that box? What’s in that tote?” With each question she would inform me what each item was. After a couple more trips and being frustrated with having to carry and move all of these things, I again told her how she needed to get rid of stuff. Ronda just simply stood there as I begin to ask her about all those boxes stacked up that needed to be taken to the barn and I said, “So, what is all that junk?” Which she smiled and said, “yours!” It is so easy to see everyone else, but hard to examine yourself.

In order to understand perhaps how this text applies to us, let’s begin by asking the question. . .

I. Why Examine Ourselves?

To see if you are in the faith! The expression “in the faith” refers to being a faithful Christian. So, we are to examine if we are remaining faithful to the Lord! Each and every week millions of people attend a church thinking they are saved and okay. I must tell you that just because a person goes to church doesn’t mean their saved and okay. Coming to church doesn’t make you a Christian any more than going to Burger King makes you a hamburger! However, many people act that way because they think that can have it their way.

The Today’s Living Bible says it this way. “Check up on yourselves. Are you really Christians? Do you pass the test? Do you feel Christ's presence and power more and more within you? Or are you just pretending to be Christians when actually you aren't at all? I hope you can agree

that I have stood that test and truly belong to the Lord. I pray that you will live good lives, not because that will be a feather in our caps, proving that what we teach is right; no, for we want you to do right even if we ourselves are despised.” (2 Cor 13:5-7 TLB)

We need to remember that the danger of drifting is ever present. It is possible to drift away if we neglect our salvation.

“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?” (Heb 2:1-3 NIV)

“See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. 14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.” (Heb 3:12-14 NIV)

Not only should we make sure we're in the faith, but we must ask ourselves, “is Christ in me?” Do the things that I do reflect Christ or self? The way that I treat people, the things I say—the activities that I am involved in—the total life that I am living, does it reflect Christ? If Christ is in you, His presence and power will be seen by others.

According to our text, if we fail the test, then we are just playing a part. If we fail the test, then we cannot expect to have a place in heaven. This is a time and place that we must be brutally honest with ourselves because it is a matter of eternity. If you were arrested and charged with being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

In the 1940s, Fred Craddock began serving as a missionary to India. When World War II ended, Craddock's church wired him funds for a steamer ticket to return home. Arriving in his port of departure on Christmas day, Craddock discovered a disturbing sight. A ship of German-Jewish refugees had been allowed to temporarily dock, and these exiles had been stuffed in small spaces with no human comforts. Craddock used his money to buy pastries for as many as he could. When he informed his church, they asked, “Don't you know they don't believe in Jesus?” “Yes,” Craddock replied. “But I do.” (author unknown)

If we are to examine ourselves, by. . .

II. What measure are we to use?

Let me begin by sharing what we are not to use. We are not to use self standards or emotions. "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve." (Jer 17:9-10 NIV)

"He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

Luke 16:15 NIV

We are approved only if the Lord approves us. In the Bible we read, "For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends." (2 Cor 10:18NIV)

We also read, "I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God." (1 Cor 4:3-5NIV)

We can be wrong in our basic assumptions, which can lead to wrong conclusions about ourselves. There will be many people at the Judgment who thought they were pleasing God during their lifetime only to be told to depart. We must therefore look for a standard outside of ourselves by which to examine ourselves!

We cannot look to others by which to measure ourselves. What happens when we use others as a standard? We begin looking around to find someone who we think is worse than we are, do we not? So many times I have heard people say, "well, I'm not as bad as so and so."

When Jesus was talking about the religious leaders of that time He said, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men." And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!" (Mark 7:6-10 NIV)

So, if we are not to use ourselves as a measure and we are not to use

others, what are we to use? We are to use the standards of God's word. "For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends." (2 Cor 10:18NASU)

"No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval." (1 Cor 11:18-19NIV)

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Tim 2:15NIV)

The only appropriate standard to use when we examine ourselves is the Word of God. We cannot trust our feelings, or what others might say.

Finally, let me share some . . .

III. Questions We Must Ask Ourselves.

Am I in Christ and is He in me? "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Gal 3:27NASU)

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17-18NIV)

Can you say with boldness as Paul did, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." (Gal 2:20NASU)

Are the marks of discipleship present in my life? Am I abiding in His word? Do I love my brethren like Christ loved me? Am I bearing fruit? Am I showing zeal for the good work of God? Do I have the same attitude as those disciples who walked with Christ?

Conclusion; Each one of us must ask our self am I still walking in the faith. What is it I must do today to ensure I will pass the test?

We must use God's word to evaluate ourselves. We must understand fully that Christianity is not a religion but a lifestyle built upon a relationship with Jesus Christ. Yes, salvation is a free gift from God, but in order to achieve it we must be living it!

In Discipleship Journal, Carole Mayhall tells of a woman who went to a diet center to lose weight. The director took her to a full-length

mirror. On it he outlined a figure and told her, 'This is what I want you to be like at the end of the program.'

Days of intense dieting and exercise followed, and every week the woman would stand in front of the mirror, discouraged because her bulging outline didn't fit the director's ideal. But she kept at it, and finally one day she conformed to the longed-for image. (August 8, 1990 Daily Bread)

My friends, each one of us must be intense in our daily walk to become more like the image we long to be like.

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the greatest of them all? His name is Jesus Christ. Do you know Him today?

Amen