

MARK'S REMARKS

The theme of discipleship has me recalling a Sioux Falls radio commercial that aired a few years ago. The Christian radio station K-Love would play catchy commercials dealing with relationships, prayer, and this one in particular, Scripture. They would sarcastically promote “*a life of ease could be had by all with... The Erasable Bible.*” (Read the italicized words with the voice of Bob Barker, it helps carry the point)

If I had an Erasable Bible, the challenge of becoming like Christ would be less complicated, less demanding, and more comfortable, more relaxed. For instance...

(John 16:33)...Jesus said if I am his disciple, I will have much trouble in this world ...Erase.

(Matthew 5:11)...I am blessed and ought to be glad and rejoice when I am insulted... Erase.

(1 John 5:3) Love of God is displayed by my obedience, hence, when I disobey, it reflects the depth of my love for God. Not sure I want to deal with that truth...Erase.

(Luke 14:33) Scripture declares if I am not willing to give up everything, I cannot be His disciple. Willingly? Everything?...Erase.

(James 3:1) Those who teach will be judged more strictly...Erase.

(1 John 4:20) If I do not love all my brothers and sisters in Christ, I cannot truthfully say, I love God. Love of God equals love of brother. Feel uncomfortable with the revelations that truth reveals. No problem I can simply...Erase.

(Hebrews 4:13 and Matthew 12) Everything is laid bare before the eyes of the Lord and I will have to give an account for everything, even each careless word. Everything...each word...too difficult...Erase.

Finally Luke 6 is crystal clear that I am to love my enemies, turn my other cheek, do good to those who hate me, and bless those who curse me. I am not to judge or condemn, I am called to forgive. That standard seems too difficult. Loving those in Christ can be challenging at times, does he really call me to love my enemies in the same way? Much simpler to erase.

Now, if we could erase the hard or challenging truths revealed in Scripture, our *felt* needs would be met. We imagine we would feel better if the road leading to Christ-likeness was with the wind, downhill, shorter, more traveled, and perfectly smooth. Why not go ahead and be treated like a king on the entire journey, every need attended too, carried on the shoulders of others.

However, our *real* needs would not be satisfied. Because while we may think we would desire an easier call to discipleship, deep down we long for a Divine standard. Deep within our genetic code is the yearning to become what we were created to be...the perfect image of God. We *real*(ly) want to grow, we *real*(ly) want to be challenged. We want to see convicting evidence that verifies we are being reformed and transformed by God. We want to hear the Deep call to deep.

I must wrestle with the truth that to be called a child of God includes being placed on the Potter's wheel. Yet, to be placed on the Potter's wheel is also to be placed in the Potter's Hand. So, I can choose. Read quickly over those difficult truths, 'erasing them' from my Bible, or allow them to clearly remain, pondering upon them, allowing him to eternally reshape those things which are not exemplary of his vessel. You know, more than an erasable Bible, I desire to remain in those hands. For within are unspoiled guidance, power, truth, and love.

But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the LORD came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel (Jeremiah 18:4-6).

Spinning within his hands,

Pastor Mark