

ABIDE IN ME, 5

For years I've observed that many who have the greatest zeal for Jesus, and who are the most servant-hearted without need for recognition, are persons in their second marriages or those with other known failures. That might be counter-intuitive to some but its true.

So, last Sunday on our way to another city to visit some new Facebook friends I was thinking, "I'd bet this is not their first marriage."

They were strangers to us (or so we thought) but there were too many clues to ignore in their love for Jesus, their discernment about life and the way they serve in a dying church. (We figured out later that we had known the wife when she was in high school decades ago, and the other detail was confirmed over a wonderful lunch at their house.)

HERE'S THE THING

Many Christians cover their weaknesses and sins with spiritual cologne. It's a self-centered game of pretend that we play as part of being churchy, but known failure can be a pride-smasher that helps get our eyes off ourselves as we focus on Jesus in our time of need.

Certain sins like gluttony, the abuse of power, dysfunctional families in the pre-divorce stage, and definitely love for the world, are accepted, but we jump right on those caught in porn, pregnancy out of wedlock, and divorce, for example. It comforts us to know that we're not guilty of such sins. (sic)

Some leave the church because they don't expect to ever be forgiven and accepted. Others humbly acknowledge their failure, receive God's forgiveness and healing, and fervently move on with Him. It's the godly sorrow of II Cor. 7:8-11 which leads to the zeal of v11 and it is beautiful. I also observe that they often have greater clarity and focus on life because their minds are less cluttered by what others think.

TO THE POINT

Only those who are broken can truly abide in Christ because it costs us so much (everything) and we're not willing to pay the price if we think we're already whole. It's the Mark 2:17 thing.

We're all "sinners" but some show that they know it and others don't. Hopefully they come to know it and show it without personal failure or other crushing hardship. Would right now be a Heb. 3:14-15 "Today"?

Ken Stoltzfus
Kidron, Ohio USA
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PS - I trust you to not think that I'm soft on divorce. God hates it and it causes indescribable pain for multiple generations. It's awful. But so is other sin including much that is never exposed. I'm merely sharing what I see in saints who manifest the redemptive power of God in ways that many others need, but who haven't been exposed in a way that brings them to their knees to receive it.

