

SEPTEMBER 2008

Dear ones,

I have a loved brother-in-Jesus named Nick who lives half a continent away. When we see or call each other, one of us asks the other: "Are you still pitiful?"...and the other answers, "Yep, still pitiful. ... You?" "Yep, still pitiful!" Getting that truth out in the open pretty much guarantees an honest conversation. I become very uneasy around Christians who knock themselves out trying to impress one another.

Last Sunday Andy, our beloved young pastor/friend downloaded the truth about the judgment seat on us.* Probably nobody wanted to hear it. The more welcome news that "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" hangs a whole lot better! ** ...but that's what I like about Andy: He preaches the WHOLE truth and nothing BUT the truth. He, like most of us, has a pesky "thorn in the flesh" which keeps him humble.

...so am I preoccupied with dread of the coming judgment seat? Shoot, no! That would lead to analyzing my motives and the Holy Spirit raps me on the head when I do that: "...judge nothing before the appointed time; wait til 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."***

I love surprises so I kinda look forward to the judgment seat. There will be some tears which He will wipe away, and there will be some praises...tears about how far short I fall from being LIKE Him. Whatever praises I receive from Him will be trumped by my praise FOR Him and here's the reason for that: When I see Him as He really IS**** the full meaning of His GRACE toward me will be more than I could have ever understood this side of Heaven.

Recommendation: "...encourage each other with these words."*****

Ted is beginning another ministry this week: Peacemakers. He has honestly tried to lay aside his burden to teach these biblical guidelines for getting along with one another, but he hasn't been able to do that... so here he goes. Again.

Love, Jo

* I CORINTHIANS 3.10B-15.

** ROMANS 8:1,2

*** I CORINTHIANS 4:8

**** I JOHN 3:2

***** I THESSALONIANS 4:18