

Things are not what they seem

When my children were small, they would not eat Eggplant. Now their dad and I liked Eggplant, and one large Eggplant could easily feed a family of four and it was cheap and not Tuna Noodle Casserole which I disliked immensely but they loved. I often breaded it and fried the Eggplant and so I cut it into strips and breaded it and fried it and told them it was fish sticks. They ate it until they saw me preparing it and I told them it was Eggplant, and they liked it. They would not eat it again. I don't think they ever trusted my cooking again. But it did inspire them to learn to cook themselves. They are both excellent cooks and I give credit to Eggplant for that.

The church in Corinth was embroiled in controversy. Immorality was a problem in all of Corinth and had invaded the churches and temples. Paul wrote to the church urging them to stop the quarrels and the behavior. The temples and places of worship were not what they were supposed to be. Years ago, at a funeral the speaker, a young man becoming a Pastor, spoke of how the departed had died without the forgiveness of God because he had not verbally accepted Christ. I became angry as did several others. Who knew what was in his heart and mind as he faced death. I thought it rather presumptuous of this young man to judge someone like that. A few years later the young man was arrested and sent to prison. At that time, he was a Youth Pastor in his church and had been accused by several young boys of sexually abusing them. He was not what he seemed to be.

Judas kept the purse and helped the poor but Jesus wasn't following the path that Judas wanted and so he sold him for 30 pieces of silver. He saw the wrong in what he did, but it set the crucifixion in motion. We are all sinners and we all can be forgiven. I ask for forgiveness daily and know that tomorrow I will ask again. God uses our imperfections and misguided acts to bring us closer to him. When we lay those sins and our sorrows at the altar, God uses them to make us stronger and better.

Jesus took a thief with him to paradise and all the thief had to do was believe in Jesus's divinity. (Luke 23:42-43) How can we ask more than that of anyone among us? We are not the judge, but we are called to forgiveness.

Luke 6:37-38 Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Lord, forgive us when we sin and when we judge others. Be with our church, may we be the hands and feet of Jesus in all we do. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry, guide, and protect him in all he does. Be with his family. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve. Comfort them. Be with our staff and leaders, guide and protect them. We ask that you be with the sick and those who grieve, comfort them. Help us Lord to reach out to those who seek you, may they find you here waiting for them. Be with our country, help us to be as one. Each of us may be different, but all are the same in love for you and country and each other. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson