**FACING THE MUSIC**

***Your Sins Will Find You Out***

I love studying the origins of idioms. You know, idioms like “don’t beat around the bush,” or, “he’s got egg on his face,” or, “that’s music to my ears,” or, “don’t put the cart before the horse.” Let me give you one that intrigues me and leads to a powerful spiritual lesson.

There is a debate as to where the phrase “to face the music” came from. Some claim it is of American origin dating to around 1850 when the United States military would bring a disgraced soldier that had dishonored his code of conduct to the parade ground and give him a dishonorable discharge by stripping him of his rank and marching him out of the fort to the tune of “The Rogue March.” In other words he would be drummed out of service, requiring him to face the music for his actions. It came to mean facing the consequences for your actions.

Another theory originated in Japan. In the Japanese Imperial Orchestra was a person of great wealth and influence who had demanded a place in the group that played before the emperor. There was just one small problem, he couldn’t play a note of music! Oh, and one more problem, he couldn’t even read music. But, because of his financial influence, as well as his under-the-table bribes to the conductor, he was allowed to sit in the second row of the flute section. When the music began this deceiver would raise the flute to his mouth, pucker his lips and go through the motions of playing for the emperor. This con game went on for over two years, apparently fooling everyone.

Suddenly something revealing happened. The old conductor stepped down and was replaced by a new one. This leader was the type to demand each player give a personal audition to be allowed to continue in this elite orchestra. One by one each musician performed a solo until it came the fake flutist’s turn. He called in sick but was sent to a doctor and given a bill of health. He was forced to appear to prove his ability. In shame he had to confess himself a fraud. He was unable to “face the music.”

Abraham Lincoln has been credited with the saying, “We may deceive all the people some of the time; we may deceive some of the people all of the time; but we can’t deceive all of the people all of the time, and not God at any time.” Most of us have never heard that last phrase, for Lincoln was speaking in the context of standing before God. The apostle Paul said it even better, “***Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap***” (Galatians 6:7).

Moses said the same thing but with a different twist. Read the story in Numbers 32. The tribes of Gad and Reuben came to Moses after they had conquered their enemies on the eastern side of the Jordan River. That was not supposed to be the promised land, but these two tribes saw it was perfect for their livestock. They came to Moses and requested that any land that would have been theirs in the promised land west of the Jordan be given to others so that they could possess this prime property. Moses became angry and lectured them on their history of rebellion when their fathers refused to enter the promised land 40 years before. But these two tribes immediately told Moses that they fully intended to go fight with their brethren and help conquer the land, only they wanted this piece of real estate, not the land chosen previously. Moses agreed, but with this caveat:

“*But if you will not do so (i.e. go to war in Canaan), then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; and* ***be sure your sins will find you out***!” (Numbers 32:23)

That phrase, “*be sure your sins will find you out*,” is haunting. It makes me shiver right down to my bootstraps! Like the disgraced soldier, or the fake flutist, these Gadites and Reubenites were told in no uncertain terms that if you try to “pull the wool over our eyes” (another idiom that has a fascinating story), just know this – God will uncover your treachery and make you face the music! They may think they are getting away with it, but God will not be mocked. He will expose their deception and punish them severely, just like He did their forefathers at Kadesh Barnea when they rebelled. Their carcasses rotted in the Sinai wilderness! Their sins found them out.

We live our lives before an all-seeing God. Every presumptuous sin we commit is seen with perfect 20/20 vision, filmed in Technicolor, reviewed in slow motion, and archived to be shown at Judgment for all to see! It’s as if we are wearing a body camera 24/7/365 and recording every thought, word and deed that we think, say and do. The film room in heaven is monitored around the clock with no possibility of “pulling a fast one” (another idiom) on God.

Remember, king David tried to deceive all the people, all the time. He soon learned he couldn’t even deceive some of the people some of the time, because he could not deceive God at any time. The Lord sent Nathan to expose him with the immortal words, “Thou art the man!” His sins had found him out. They always do. No exceptions.

You cannot run from sin’s consequences. Sin carries within itself the power to pay the sinner back. Never forget, sin’s payback is hell. Don’t even think about toying with sin. It cannot be tamed, outrun, or shaken off. No matter how safe you think you are, if you live in disobedience to God, be sure of this, your sin will find you out. You will have to face the music. You will have to be stripped of rank and drummed out of God’s fellowship to the cadence of the Rogue March.

But there is good news. God forgives. If you have tried to hide your sin(s), open your heart to God right here and right now. Another way to say that is to quote John: “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.  If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I Jn. 1:8-9).

Face the music now with a heart of repentance. Or, face the music later with an eternity to live in regret. The orchestra is tuning up. What will you do? - Rick