

## The Keeper of the Garbage Dump

In Jesus' time, many people considered those with disease and physical problems as sinners being punished by God. They were shunned and ignored and treated like garbage. When Jesus and his disciples met a man born blind, the Lord said his condition was not because of sin, but to show the power of God. When the blind man followed Jesus' instructions he could see. When the Pharisees questioned the man, he replied simply, "I was blind but now I see." (John 9:25)

We are all damaged by our sins and the sins of others. We carry with tons of garbage: broken relationships; pain, hurt, sorrow, guilt, addictions, lusts, hatred, being unforgiving, gossip, slander, lies, envy, thievery, and murder to name a few. When we come to Jesus and ask forgiveness and invite him into our hearts and trust him to control our lives, Jesus buries all that garbage in his garbage dump. His light, His love, His mercy floods

over this garbage, season by season as we grow in our relationship with Him. Jesus turns the garbage into a rich compost of empathy. We begin to grow into the brothers and sisters of Christ, righteous sons and daughters of a heavenly Father.

The Pharisees observed their laws and rituals. They believed that their education in tradition and ritual coupled with their vigilant observance of every law would assure their righteousness before God. But they too were just as blind spiritually as the man was blind physically. Because they could not believe in Jesus, because they believed in the law, the Pharisees would remain blind to the healing power of the mercy of God as shown by the life and ministry of Jesus. As the scripture says in I Samuel 16:7, "The Lord does not see as mortals see, they look on outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." We need to look at each other with God-like eyes, seeing at least the possibility of what each of us is or could possibly become.

Sometimes we are like the Pharisees and we are blind to the needs of others and the conditions around us. We also trust in our own will and strength to do good and when we do that we are blind to the power of the Holy Spirit to give us all we need to do the work God calls us to do.

Often, we are like Timothy where Paul writes in I Timothy 1: 13 – 16, we remember the garbage and feel unworthy. Perhaps the man Jesus healed of blindness felt unworthy too, because he was treated like garbage all his life.

We are worthy, not of anything we have done on our own, but because Christ took our wretched unworthiness and it was nailed on the cross with Him. He carried it then to the tomb and left it there. He arose and made us worthy and God's righteous children. God's love and mercy covers all of us. He makes us new creatures worthy of love and capable of sharing His love and light to all we meet and seek out in His name. He is a God of second,

third and even fourth chances—as many as we need, as God pursues us to bring us home.

The garbage we leave with Jesus can become a blessing. As the Apostle Paul writes: “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize.” (Philippians 3: 13 – 14) What's more, He never leaves us alone. Psalm 23 tells of His love, His care, and constant help and companionship.

In Ephesians 5: 8 – 14, Paul says we were in darkness but now we are in the light and we should live in that light. These verses shout to me that we were blind, but now that we see, we must use this new vision, God's vision, to see the needs of those around us.

Like the blind man said, “I know one thing, I was blind but now I see.” We can say that too or “I was sick but now I'm well.” I was lost but now I'm found.” Or I was following Satan, but now I belong completely to God and he is holding on tight to me.

He took out the garbage.