

Chronicles of Diversity

Your leadership weekly



St. Paul's Mission, NE Washington

Rebuke Road - Admonition Avenue

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Mankind lives life with a dead Albatross around his neck, symbolic of man's guilt before God and creation, for the wrongs, or sins he has committed. So are the thoughts of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) in his "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Through the great wisdom of man, the desire to form a Pantisocratic community (equal rule of all) in America, and an addiction to Opium, Coleridge never succeeded in burying that dead bird.

One of my more informed readers of last week's Special Prayer Request informed me that my mother's oft quotation of "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink," came directly from Coleridge's famous work.

Solomon, in Ecclesiastes speaks almost exclusively of this wisdom "under the sun" and in harmony with Solomon, Coleridge's attempts to achieve the ideal community are met with futility, failure, and vanity. But it also seems that his attempts to form the ideal egalitarian community have been adopted as the gospel truths of our Post Modern pantheistic genre.

That however, is not the life of Wonder Springs. Actually, as I was researching on the internet the use of wonder, before I came to wonder springs, I was interested in the term wonder sea(s) for I was developing the idea from the sense of wonder, one can find in creation, especially in aquatic and marine environments, with only a smattering of scientific knowledge.

In order to get to the community life in Wonder Springs, one must enter and maintain his citizenship by traveling individual, dusty, uniquely created roads, by which "I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference." In a way Robert Frost's poem reflects that travail with and against nature that Coleridge saw. Our Albatross view changes perspective, but does not set us free.

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I have created four roads into Wonder Springs, this week we will look at Rebuke Road, next week Tribulation Trail. That leaves Admonition Avenue, which is quite similar to Rebuke Road and are synonyms, but more politically correct, and Striving Street, where I have spent most of my time, hence I may have too much material for its essay.

Various words are translated in the Bible for rebuke. But as rebuke the King James lists 77 references; the New American Standard, 86, the New International, 103; and the New King James, a whopping 120.

We don't like to be rebuked, it has a negative connotation. Rebuke is out, encouragement is in. People want and need to be encouraged to fully develop their self esteem, or so says our Albatross burdened society. In the one-sided zeal for self acceptance we really have no contrast to encouragement. Without the complete contrast of opposing alternatives or absolutes, the will, and/or ability to change, to repent, from one direction to another is lost.

It just so happens that the Bible has seven references where God rebukes the seas to bring about change in creation. Those seven also have a valuable contribution to make when we adventure from creation's natural seas onto the virtual or internal seas of humanity's desires. Those seven are found in 2 Samuel 22:16, Psalm 18:15, which are really parallel passages; Psalm 106:9; Isaiah 50:2, Nahum 1:4, again parallel passages; Matthew 8:26, Mark 4:39 where Jesus calmed the Sea of Galilee.

From the creation account and the total context of the Bible we learn that the word of God is good. The word of God therefore uttered in rebuke is also good. The Bible also teaches that the word of God is powerful, able to create or make changes as God deems necessary. While we might not like it, we must acquiesce to these truths

In the Old Testament passages the 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18 passages, relate to when David was delivered from the hand of Saul. In Isaiah and Nahum we see the rebuke of God to change the course of nature. In Psalm 106, we see this same natural alteration of nature as it effected the course of the Red Sea as the children of Israel left Egypt to go to the Promised Land in Exodus 14. But in the original passage we see only the acts carried out by Moses to part the Red Sea. There is no mention of the rebuke of God on the Red Sea, but only on Moses and the people. But through the acts of Moses the sea parted.

At the word of rebuke by God, the status quo was altered in all these passages. But the Old Testament passages fit within the context of a creation in its resting natural state, or entropy, being changed in David and the Red Sea, as deliverance. In Isaiah and Nahum as retribution for sin. In all these passages, the word of rebuke is in the form of the application of law. This is especially true in that Moses, the lawgiver, upsets the peaceful Red Sea, causing a passage way for the children of Israel, God's chosen people. This application of law is further demonstrated against Saul and for David, and against the sinful chosen people of Israel in rebellion to the Word of God. From the usual state of entropy, God rebukes upset for beneficial change through His law.

In the New Testament passages in Matthew and Mark, we see Jesus Christ the fulfillment of the law give a quite different rebuke. Out of the chaos of the storm, both the natural and the inner struggle in the hearts of the disciples, the storm is quieted, both externally and internally. This power of Christ takes place of course, in the whole Bible context, not only in these passages.

Back to our Ancient Mariner Rime, we see that the law is the Albatross around our neck, which we can not by any means of our own shed. In the Rime, this burden is at times lifted by demons, but only for a time, to return with renewed vengeance and required sacrifice. A sacrifice that Coleridge and his friends, never were able to achieve in their own strength, and they tried earnestly.

The peace that the Mariner sought but never found, required an external power to have the Albatross removed. The substituted righteousness visualized by the cross that religiously educated Coleridge mentions, but is unable to accept, is paramount, because he only sees the crucifix as the same material as the created Albatross. The eternal Personality, the Triune God, outside human intellect is the only source of redemption however. The righteousness we seek comes in not only a natural relationship that many point out, but also in a legal, binding covenant, of all of Scripture. Together they provide eternal freedom for worldly bondage.

Old and New Testaments, Old and New Promises, Wills & Estates. The New fulfills the former, and supersedes it, but does not eliminate the former, the New just improves upon the Old. The Old makes us aware of the Albatross and we have the desire to have it removed, the New Testament word, empowers us to have it removed both positionally and progressively. However, as long as we seek to remove that dead bird by the power of the Old covenant, it will remain, burdening our pilgrimage.

In the gospel of the New Covenant, we must recognize that it is Christ's righteousness imputed to us that removes the burden, with no merit of our self. But the church rather than seeking to pick up its cross to follow Jesus, would rather go dig in the garbage to find a monstrous decaying sea gull, and make it not only our religious God, but the mechanism by which the success of our religious programs are appraised. In the process we create a religious Christianity, which lacks the power and wonder of the rebuke of God.

A few weeks back I made some comments about EE (Evangelism Explosion) which may have been construed as my rebuke of the program. However, my rebuke is not really about the context of EE, it has to do with the fact, that only a minority of any congregation will ever put in the effort to learn its precepts. I maintain by my survey of program graduates is that in EE, participants truly first understand what the gospel they confess actually means. Foreign righteousness is imputed to sinners. After weeks of the program, of that justification pounding into hearts and minds of the morally self-righteous, the truth actually sinks in, their hearts are changed, and over time so is their life and witness.

My rebuke, if there is one, is that this same message must be pounded into the hearts and heads of the ninety percent that will never get beyond the Sunday service.

This pounding (encouraging teaching) must be done in a systematic manner, similar to the systematic and expository teaching of the word of God. This must be, for lack of a better term, catechism. The teaching of what you believe and why, in the context of historic Christianity. It moves beyond the asking of Jesus Christ to be LORD of your life, into a positive wonder that only God can make the thing work at all.

Rebuke Road must be continually paved with the gospel of peace. Not just once during a yearly Albatross hunting season, but multiple times a week. The main reason I try to put at least one gospel context into each of these messages, is not that someone might one day read them and get saved. Even though that would be cool, the main reason that I put these references in my writing is so that I can hear it again, because I need to hear it over and over, for it is a message that rebukes my flesh, for believing in its own power.

The gospel forces, by the power of the rebuking word of God, provision to calm the many storms in my life. Whether I whip up the storm by my actions, or it comes from some outside circumstance, nothing enters my life that is not first allowed by God, to rebuke me more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

I am blessed because I also get to hear the same fundamental of the gospel a couple of times in church services. I am also aware, that this is a very rare treasure that in many churches is replaced with worldly doctrine and teaching on how to turn the Albatross into a stuffed trophy.

Romans:10:11-15

For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him (Jesus Christ) will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

The preached gospel of peace contains by definition, the rebuking power of the word of God. How it works is not for us to understand, only to proclaim it in unambiguous terms continually. But because of this ability to create life out of death, everything else must become of lesser importance. For it is only gospel preaching that has the power to permanently remove the albatross from around our

neck, and let us journey in a dry and desert land, wondering at the watering effect of the gospel's glad tidings and good things.

From Wonder Springs

Last week we had new email software, this week we will try a different format. I know that some print out these messages and read them as they ride the bus or at other times. So this week we have attached a PDF file. The goal is eventually to produce these messages so that they can be posted on the web site and sent out via email within a very similar template, so that only minor changes need to be made between each venue.

I have had some inquiries about the ship Diversity, but as of yet not definite understanding for this particular ship as the path ahead. I continue, as in this message, to see a unity between Wonder Springs and the sea. How God wants that unity to be manifest remains for Him to express His will.

Seeds for Prayer

It has been a difficult week, especially in that unseen world, from which the Bible speaks, in which we battle against the evil of this present age. My personal sleep has been altered, and also a frustration of not seeing any change of circumstance, and having to hassle again with very minor details of my mother's estate that I thought were settled a couple of months ago.