

Life's Lessons from the Chicken Yard

If you watch the news you see all kinds of chaos going on around the world: masses rioting in the streets, soldiers fighting their way through terrorist strongholds, car bombings, kidnappings, drugs, teens killing teens, husbands killing wives, mothers killing their babies, school shootings, robberies, corruption, political slandering and the list just goes on! The Bible records a lot of the same unrest, violence, hatred and corruption going on throughout the history of mankind.

Have you ever asked yourself; why can't people just do the right thing and get along? Why can't we just love one another and do what is best for all of mankind? Why do we have to fight, kill, and afflict physical, emotional, and spiritual pain on one another? Why aren't we content with what we have and thankful for what blessings others have—instead of trying to find ways to take what is theirs and make it ours?

It seems that we could learn from past mistakes and live together in peace and harmony on this beautiful earth that God created. You would think that we could live our lives in ways that make life better for everyone else. However, it seems that instead of things getting better in our world, we are seeing more and more of these destructive behaviors and worldviews. Just look at Washington!

I recently had the opportunity while making the Angus sale circuit, to spend the night with my older brother Steve and his wife Sophie. They have been in ministry all of their adult lives, preaching, teaching, counseling, and doing mission work. While I was there, they proudly showed me their new chicken flock. I had seen these birds when they were just young chicks, but now they were reaching maturity.

Steve and Sophie are model chicken farmers. They received these day old chicks by mail and had not lost a single one. Even those that had deformities were still alive and healthy—having received the special care they needed to survive with their limitations.

One of the birds was different from all the rest. She was a slightly different color, had a gentle disposition, and was much prettier than all the rest—hence her name “Pretty Bird”. Pretty Bird could not run and feed with the other chickens. Though she stayed in the same coup, she had a special place real high that she would get so that the other chickens would not harass her. Every day Steve walked into the coup and hand fed Pretty Bird because the others wouldn't let her eat or drink with them. When he entered the coup in the morning to let all the birds out, Pretty Bird would stay in her spot until all the other chickens had flown out, then she would step off on Steve's shoulder to be fed and watered.

As we sat on the porch drinking a cup of his weak but tolerable coffee and watching the chickens, we talked about life, family, ministry, and all that is going on in the lives of people in our world today. Steve made several analogies about human nature and how much we behave like the chickens in his yard.

“Think about it he said, I give them all that they need; fresh food, clean water, safe dry shelter at night, a netted feed yard where hawks and other predators cannot get them. I even give them treats out of the garden that they don't really need because I know they enjoy them. They have everything they need to be content, to be happy, and to get along with one another—instead, as you see, they peck, they chase, they harass, they steal what food they can from others. If left without our care, they will destroy each other.

When one chicken is injured by another, all the others join in the attack. Unless I am here to rescue and nurture it back to health, they will eventually kill it. Even then, after I take the injured bird under my wings and nurse it back to health, once released, instead of showing love and compassion for other injured or mistreated birds, it is just as mean and vicious to other injured victims as the birds were to her. I guess they cannot help it, it is just their nature to be this way.” Well, just before Christmas Steve called and told us the sad news that Pretty Bird had been pecked to death the night before. Though just a bird, they had raised her and met all of her needs since she was a chick, feeding her every day from their hands. Pretty Bird was their favorite. Her only flaw was that she was not like all the other chickens. For that she was harassed, rejected and even killed.

Isn't it amazing how much of human nature we see in the chicken yard? Though the Lord has been more than faithful to meet all our needs and more, we still fuss and fight. We want what we want and we will hurt anyone who gets in our way. We might not hurt or kill them physically, but we will hurt or destroy their reputation, character, and Christian witness—whatever it takes to get what we want and to make ourselves look better than them. When they are down and weak, instead of showing love and compassion by nursing them back to health, we often join in the assault and beat them down.

I suppose like the chicken, it is just our nature to hurt others and to be selfish. The Bible says we are all sinners and in need of a Savior—in need of someone who could pay for and forgive our sin debt. Because of our sin and His love for us, God the Father sent Jesus His Son to shed His blood in order to pay our debt and to take upon Himself the punishment that we deserve for our sin. Because of our sinful nature and His love for us, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts so that our sinful nature could be transformed into one of love and compassion and that we could be free from having to live sinful, selfish lives. But isn't it interesting that He gives us a choice to accept or reject His forgiveness and a choice to walk in His ways or to live according to our own sinful nature?

A weeping Jesus sat on a hill overlooking the nation of people that he loved and said these words: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate.” (Mt. 23:37-38).

The choice is yours! I pray you will choose to accept God's forgiveness and walk in the council of His Holy Spirit. In doing so, your life will change, your sinful nature will change, and you will live your life to honor Him and make the lives of others better.

Blessings in Christ Jesus,
Glenn.