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Humiliation, the Flipside of Arrogance

Some Sunday in the late 1920s, a sober-faced church-school teacher looked down into my eyes and intoned "Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12) Yesterday, at age 90, I had my first fall from loss of balance: I thought I was standing, but the truth is that I was falling. The Scripture was *morally* right, and my senior-exercise trainer was *physically* right.

The metaphor from our two-leggedness hit me as I read our question: "What does the Elliott Spitzer scandal say about our public and private morality? Should he have resigned?"

The world's archives of wise-sayings and wisdom-tales have, as one common-category, the irony that weakness is the shadow side of strength, humiliation the flipside of arrogance. After using the metaphor of standing, the Apostle Paul illumines the same spiritual-moral truth by the metaphor of weakness/strength: "when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10) Overwhelmed by murderous opposition, his only hope was to confess his weakness and trust in the strength of Jesus Christ his Lord. A humble, realistic self-assessment in his situation protected him from hubris and opened him to the inner strength God was eager to give him. In this moral universe, the options are humility or humiliation.

The advantages to walking on two legs are worth the risks of falling; the advantages of freedom are worth the risks of corruption.

Yes, Spitzer should have resigned. May he use his humiliation wisely, to make a new start by the grace of God. As for his world-class hypocrisy – seeing to the enacting of tough laws against his own hidden crime – it was a pitiful effort at *pseudo*-atonement, as if one could be forgiven by being especially hard on sinners of one's own kind.

True atonement, redemption, forgiveness, newness of life is a gift God is always eager to give – as in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Gospel of Luke 15:11-32).

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | MARCH 16, 2008; 9:42 PM

Comments

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So Mo you'd prefer a God for whom justice is but a whim utterly without meaning? Such a God would be little more than a tyrant worthy of every rebellion man could throw against him.

The Christian God however took upon himself the form of a man that one wholly innocent of any sin might pay the price for the sins of man. No man could pay for any sin but his own. And that only once.

The metaphysics of it are simply this. Only one born a human could pay for humanities sins but only one pre-existing this universe could effect the entirety of time within this universe. Hence only the sacrifice of one both wholly man and wholly God could satisfy the demands of perfect justice.

POSTED BY: GARYD | MARCH 18, 2008 9:37 AM

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the sin of adultery and the sin of christianity.

in christianity,

adultery is a sin but blaspheming god allmighty by attributing to him an earthly son is not ??? not only that but it,s a perfection ,that all good wills and sins are to be judged against!!!(for so god love the world he nailed his only begoten son on the cross for the sin and saftey and perfectness of mankind?????????????????.if mankind

doesnot make it thru the gate of the perfect son??? then he/she is doomed and ruined and wrecked at the junk yard of sins.

the reality is ,mankind been and still sining around the clock day and night whethere the son was nailed on the cross or not, mankind still sining no mater what .mankind is mankind ,and god allmighty is god allmighty who created mankind and put in mankind a working desires that need to be fullfired ,fullfilling the desires,the good wills and the sins of mankind need to be judged against the perfect word of the creator god who created all mankind including jesus who never claimed to be the son of god nor was crusified on the cross for the sin and saftey of mankind .

the curve and tendancey of mankind toward sin is undeniable but the question and issue is how to eliminate that and how to elevate that?what were mankind befor jesus doing?what was mankind doing befor the mythology of the cross?

this questiones was answered long time ago way befor the creation of jesus .

mankind at the inconviene of hungerness may comit the sin of stealing ,mankind at the inconviene of his lust and the lust of the society that he/she born and raised may comit the sin of adultery ,but what is the excuse of mankind when he/she deny and shirk his/her creator god who creared mankind from none.

repentance is due to the creator allforgiving god of allmankind .

POSTED BY: MO | MARCH 18, 2008 5:26 AM
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Less gossiping and gallivanting around in sinful practices and more learning about God: that's what is required in 2008 if we are to hallow God's name.

Let's not forget to recall that God exists for us to acknowledge Him pray fully with praise in our heart.

Let's not forget to recall that the holy Bible exists in print for us to explore it as students.

<http://jesuschrist.bigthicketdirctory.net>

www.geocities.com/holyholyholyjesus

Let's not spend our whole day trying to catch someone in the act of adultery in order to humiliate them publicly; for our mission involves working diligently to bring adulterers to Jesus Christ who can inspire them to a higher way of thinking and behaving.

Let's remember, sincere students, that Jesus Christ can cleanse adulterers too!

Enjoy God Triune's company and enjoy His holy Bible that's God's will for you and me (and don't worship chocolate ahead of Jesus Christ this Easter.

May God richly bless you; so that you stop fishing feverishly for gossip in 2008.

POSTED BY: JOSEF SEFTON | MARCH 18, 2008 1:28 AM
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Hey, happy 90th, 'Evil Santa!' :)

That kind of longevity is probably not in the cards for me, this time around, but living that long is an achievement. Pretty sure I was built for speed, this time, not so much endurance, at least after 'compassionate conservatism' had its way with the drivetrain, but it's occurred to me that if I continue to beat expectations, I'll be among the last Americans to remember life without computers.

Falling down isn't exactly the same kind of metaphor, for me, but I do know how it feels the moment 'Push harder' stops working, and next thing you know, you're kissing Boylston Street.

I always say gravity's the Mother's way of saying She'll have you back in any condition.

Just in case you were thinking so, there's no shame, there. That's sometimes a little hard to remember in this culture, and all, especially if frailty comes a bit earlier than usual.

But, on the topic, (yet **another** sex scandal, is anyone still surprised?) ...you're right to say that obsessively-punishing the 'sinners' you most fear to be isn't healthy, let's say.

Certainly, Spitzer's little hypocritical moral crisis should **not** have been played out on the lives of others who may have had less privilege than he could hide behind. **That's** where it really has the potential to hurt people, and probably has.

To me, well, marital infidelity, presuming no arrangements were made, ..it's oathbreaking. Crusades against sex workers only make their conditions worse, in general, and a man of power hurting people for his **own** 'sins' is certainly unacceptable, if sadly too-common a pattern.

In these matters, the public interest must be our guide, not religion, lest this become the personal dramas of the powerful, lived out upon the lives of the disadvantaged.

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | MARCH 17, 2008 4:05 PM
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Falling is the easy part as I'm sure you now know if you didn't before. I hope you managed to get back on your feet and suffered no permanent damage. That's wherein the difficulties lie.

Did I say lie? Oh yeah, almost forgot about Spitzer. Can't help but notice his final wave to the crowd of admirers is being muted by events on Wall Street. It's a shame he won't be there to prosecute the Villains or will he too manage to recover his balance. Jesus still loves him doesn't He so maybe.

The most violated of all the commandments -
11. Thou shalt not believe thy own lies.

With or without God the rule applies equally well.

POSTED BY: BGONE | MARCH 17, 2008 12:18 PM
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Casting Stones

Mr.Spitzer made a name and built a career for himself by condemning people involved in prostitution. His zero tolerance policy in such matters affected not only prostitutes but many households -- husbands wives children -- were broken apart and forever changed.

He very much resembles the scribes and Pharisees who brought the woman caught in adultery to Jesus demanding the law be fulfilled - that she be stoned untill dead.

These Pharisees were adulterers and deserving of a stoning themselves.

So it is with this modern day scribe Mr. Spitzer, same story two thousand years apart.

POSTED BY: 4TH WATCH | MARCH 17, 2008 10:55 AM
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How true this statement is. Too bad more of humanity does not realize this and thus prevent "forced humility" by being caught instead of "humbling yourself," which I might add is less painful and more discreet.

POSTED BY: NO WIGGLE ROOM FOR BLATANT ABUSERS | MARCH 16, 2008 10:59 PM
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