

Failure in the Pond

Scripture Reading — 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

In the following directives I have no praise for you. . . . — 1 Corinthians 11:17

Heroic as he was, there were times when my friend Ron slipped and fell. One Christmas Eve, he and Andy got drunk.

Months earlier, Andy had come to one of our church events slouching, reluctant, and angry. But when he walked in, as he put it, “God just wrapped me in a big ball of cotton.” He was changed by the transforming power of God. Andy became our big, comic, teddy bear.

At Christmastime, Ron was lonely, and since he and Andy had become good friends, Ron invited Andy to stop by on Christmas Eve. “Well,” Ron said, “I opened a bottle of wine. . .”—and then at some point in the early hours of Christmas morning Ron and Andy were standing knee-deep in a rural neighborhood pond, shooting off a pistol into the night sky. Later, Ron was horrified with himself. Andy was deeply ashamed.

Sanctification isn’t a once-and-done deal. It can have moments of shocking failure, times when we stumble and fall—just as people did in the church at Corinth. Rich people were taking the best food for themselves and leaving only scraps for the poorer members. They were also drinking much more than a thimble-sized cup of wine for communion.

Yet Paul still called them “brothers and sisters.” A sanctified Christian knows that no matter how bad sin is, God isn’t going to quit on you. His forgiving grace is always there.

Prayer

Lord, I’m sorry. Please forgive me. Help me to keep trusting in your faithful love. Thank you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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