

Titus House Newsletter

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The Plaque on the Wall —by Mark Preller

In my apartment I have a “reading chair.” I call it that because it was chosen for comfort and placed where I have the best light for... well, reading.

Just across from me, opposite the chair, is a what used to be a blank wall. When I first moved in I didn’t think much about it, I mean, it’s just a wall and being a typical guy I did not see any reason to get all that worried about whether or not the wall had any kind of decoration.

One day while browsing through a local thrift store I found a couple of small wall plaques. They were nothing special but I bought them anyway. One of the plaques depicts a cross with some flowers at the base and a few birds flying around. The other one is a picture of a bowl along with a sheaf of wheat with the words give us this day our daily bread.

My original thought was that I would eventually find a use

for them, perhaps as gifts. It was when I got home that it occurred to me that those two little plaques would fit nicely on that blank wall, so, that’s where I put them.

About two weeks later as I was sitting in my chair, not



doing much of anything just letting my thoughts wander, I realized that those two plaques, the cross one in particular, changed the whole character of that wall. What you need to understand is that the wall is

fairly large. It is about 7 feet wide and 8 feet tall. Yet this little plaque, which is only 6 ½ inches tall and 4 inches wide is able to, by its mere presence, alter the character of the entire wall.

In the same way we, as followers of Christ Jesus, are able to change the character of the world around us. Sometimes we may feel small and insignificant. We see how large the world is and wonder how we, as small as we are, can make a difference. My friends, you have the power of the living God within you. Just as that small “insignificant” plaque changes the whole character of the wall just by being there, so too can we, as Christians, change the nature of the “walls” around us. All you have to do is be there. Be seen. Your very presence makes the difference.

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH OUR LETTER?

Don says it might make a good bottom for your bird cage. Assuming you already have your birds cared for, let me give you our financial facts. God has provided our needs during the nine months of this year without our previous sponsor. We have held our breath and prayed really hard at

times but have never gone into debt. Here are the present needs: Monthly paper letter to 250 people: \$270, La Pasada help such as clothing, simple glasses, other needs of new arrivals from prison: about \$100 a month. Adding collect phone calls from prisons, driving new arrivals around to appointments, the whole monthly expense is around \$500 a

month. Of course Don and I don’t take a salary. If you would make a monthly pledge to Titus House, which is non-profit, and receives a year-end tax receipt, we would be greatly blest, knowing that we have friends who believe in this often side-lined ministry.



To My Brothers in Christ—by Robert

For me, to be a person who never gives up, I had to learn to press both natural barriers and unseen forces such as fear, anger, unforgiveness, guilt and shame, that almost destroyed me mentally, physically and spiritually. I learned to press through anything that was holding me back and go on to be everything God intends for me to be. I had decided that before I was arrested I would need to press on, press through and pay the price if I was going to straighten myself out. I had to become confident that what I was going to go through in prison was what I needed, exactly where God wanted me to be, so I could turn to Him and away from sin. Rather than run, God wanted me to face the music and like a magnet, I was almost immediately drawn to the Lord and was under His

wing of protection, but not without a cost. So many, like myself, lost everything and everybody in their lives, and that was in actuality a blessing from God,

God helping me, I will help my brothers and sisters in Christ, because they are my brothers and sisters.

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Joseph Barber Lightfoot
English Theologian

because I was a new creation. I could now focus on the Higher Power in life. We will not grow in the Lord or become strong in His Word just during good times. Most of us grow when we dredge through our difficulties without giving up and it is always easier when you experience the power

of the Holy Spirit which helps motivate us. At times I had to remind myself that God would not allow anything to happen to me I could not handle myself with His help. I had to struggle with the loss of my family, but being patient and by enduring, by faith, I knew God is at work on reconciliation with them, in His will and His time. I constantly pray for this reconciliation as well as for my brothers in Christ who also need reconciliation. God's way will always remain a great mystery to us, but He assures us that our prayers will be answered. Do not lose hope my brothers. Be diligent in your prayers. The only one who wants us to give up is the enemy. Count your blessings every day and everything you receive is by the grace of God. Thanks be to God, Robert

FYI

I have been hearing about a new halfway house opening that would take sex offenders called "Transition for Living". I have been following up on it so I could relate to you what is happening. Well the bad news is the deal fell through. They were not able to secure the hotel facility they were looking at. But the good news is that

they are still looking for a large hotel that would work for a halfway house. They said it might take 3 months for them to find one. I will let you know when I hear something As it is La Pasada is the only place in New Mexico that I know of that you can parole to. And as you know their waiting list is about 18 months. New Mexico surely

does need another option, 18 months of waiting past your parole date is way too long. So Brothers and Sisters please keep this in your prayers. Nothing is too big for our God.

Texas women's stories in December



The Label by Mary Sue Molnar (Texas Voices)

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What comes to mind when you hear the term 'sex offender'..... monster, serial rapist, pedophile who preys on young children? Chances are your assumptions are incorrect. Texas paints a very broad brush when it labels someone a 'sex offender'

Currently, there are over 87,000 people listed on the Texas Public Sex Offender registry including children as young as 12 years old. A blanket label against everyone who has committed a sex offense encompasses sexually active and sex-tating teens, those whose behavior falls in the "public nuisance" or 'college boy stupidity' categories. Also included are the young men (and women) who fell into a relationship with someone slightly under the age of consent, some who believed the person to be older (in Texas, mistaken age is not a defense). There are also those who made the mistake of chatting online with a police officer posing as a teenaged girl, viewing pictures on the internet, or drinking too much and not realizing that the girl sitting at the bar was only 16. And of course, there are those who were innocent and falsely convicted or forced to take a plea deal because there seemed to be no other options. The terms 'sex offense' and 'sex crime' encompass a wide variety of sexual acts.

Have you ever made a bad choice or a regrettable mistake? Should we all bear a label of some sort- a label that does not necessarily define who we are as a person? Should our mistakes label us for the rest of our life even though we are not that person anymore? If we are all honest, there is probably something in the past that could have landed



many of us on the sex offender registry.

There is no denying that there are those who have committed horrible sex crimes that have caused great harm to their victims. In fact, media and political conversations tend to focus on the most heinous offenses. They fail to differentiate between different cases and the different types of offenses. They fail to mention that most people convicted of sex offenses will

not reoffend. Studies show that across-the-board re-offense rates for sex offenders are barely over five percent, making sex offenders among the least likely criminals to reoffend.

As the Executive Director of Texas Voices for Reason and Justice, I personally know many people who are required to register and carry the label 'sex offender.' They are good husbands and fathers, good neighbors and employees, employers, and fellow church members. They are as far from being dangerous as I am from flying to the moon.

Although passing judgment is a normal and necessary part of life, Scripture warns us that we have a natural tendency to judge others in a wrong way and at times, we are prone to look for the worst in people. Theology scholar and author Jonathan Corey says it best:

'If not bad enough to judge people we actually do know, we often judge people we do not know— and we use labels to do it. Instead of a navigational tool, a label



Titus House Ministries

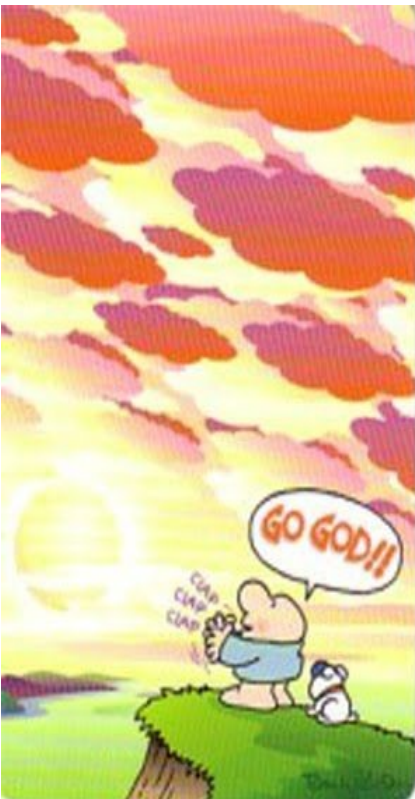
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titushouseministries.org**

Hebrew 13:3-Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.



The Label

becomes a way to determine who is in and who is out. Who is good and who is evil. Who is worthy of our self-sacrificial love, and who is not.

A human being, made in the image and likeness of God— and who is loved so much that Christ died for them— is reduced, judged, and dismissed on the basis of a single word.

On any given day I may be on the giving end of this type of judging, or on the receiving end— as are you. Such is the overwhelming power of the desire to judge others.'

*Do not judge, or you will be judged. For with the same judgment you pronounce, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
Matthew 7:2-3*

Christmas Party

Dear Titus House Friends: Don and I have reserved a special room at Furr's Cafeteria, 2004 Wyoming Blvd NE, just south of Menaul in Albuquerque for December 24th, 12:00 noon to 2:00. This is for those of you who would like to celebrate Christmas with us. The room holds 50 people; we have received some funds so you can be our guests. We must know exactly who is coming by Dec. 20th (RSVP). There will be a list of your names on the desk where you come in. Please come if possible. Many thanks to those of you who

have made this possible. We also consider this a fund raiser for those of you who would like to help Titus House. To let us know of your coming you may call us at 505-286-8807 or one of our cell phones: 505 315-7940, 505 259-0867.



Circle of Concern

The Circle of Concern is a group of concerned registered offenders, family and friends that meet together on the 2nd Sunday of each month. We are meeting this month on November 13,

at 6-8pm. We will be having a potluck. We meet at Foot-hills Church, corner of Tramway and Candelaria on the far east side of Al-

buquerque. We encourage and try to help each other. It is a safe place to share our strengths and struggles. We hope you will join us.