

Probe The Wounds of Others With Abundant Mercy

I. MATTHEW 5:7

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”¹

II. The Probing of President Lincoln’s Head Wound

When President Abraham Lincoln was shot in the back of the head at the theatre by John Wilkes Booth in 1865, he was carefully carried across the street to a rooming house. Recognizing that Mr. Lincoln had a critical head wound, the well trained surgeon attending him probed the head wound. Folk lore has it that the good Doctor used an everyday spoon to pry his way into the injured brain in an attempt to locate and remove the bullet.

In actuality, the probing was not quite *that* crude. The surgeon first used his naked finger, being able to insert his finger its full length into Mr. Lincoln’s head wound. Failing to palpate the bullet fragment, he next inserted a surgical probing instrument deep into the traumatized brain matter of the patient. This was not out of the ordinary, but the standard of care of that day, based on the care of countless victims of the American Civil War.²

¹ 1, NAB, MATTHEW 5:7.

² 2, Bollet, “Treating President Lincoln’s Fata Head Wound.”

III. Probe The Wounds of Others With Abundant Mercy

I have observed a great mystery of the universe, that we in Ministry who are called to have such tender hearts to those we give pastoral care to, are at times lacking in mercy to one another. I have seen the same phenomenon in Nursing, where it is said that “Nurses tend to eat their young.”

This is a common condition of humanity, but happily one that can be treated effectively. One treatment is to picture ourselves as the patient receiving pastoral care. Today I am a servant ministering to my fellow servants. Tomorrow they may be so to me.

So the question we should ask here is, “How can we be better ministers and servants – not just to patients, families and staff – but also to one another?” Therefore again we visit The Words of our Lord JESUS CHRIST in The Beatitudes, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”³ Let us cautiously probe the wounds of others with abundant Mercy. In our own turns, may we receive the same.

³ 1, NAB, MATTHEW 5:7.

IV. A Prayer

Let us come before The LORD together to pray
Each according to our own Tradition:
The LORD be with you!
And also with you.

[Silence]

Let us pray with Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta:

O GOD, let us...
[always act in Mercy] with great Love.
[For] It's not how much we do,
but how much Love we put in the doing;
...it is not how much we give,
but how much Love we put in the giving.”

For before Thee, O LORD,
nothing given in Mercy is small.
“...In the moment we have given it...,
it becomes infinite” before Thee.⁴

As we ourselves are merciful,
truly as it is written, we “...will be shown Mercy.”⁵
AMEN.

Let us go forth to love and serve The LORD!
Thanks be to GOD!

⁴ 3, Welborn, “Blessed Mother Teresa,” p 6, paragraph 3.

⁵ 1, NAB, MATTHEW 5:7.

V. References

1. "New American Bible." Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
2. "Treating President Lincoln's Fatal Head Wound." Alfred Jay Bollet, M.D. From: Civil War Medicine: Challenges and Triumphs. Galen Press, Ltd., Tucson, AZ, 2002. Retrieved 7/26/2009.
<http://www.galenpress.com/extras/extra29.htm>
3. "Lessons For Living – Blessed Mother Teresa." Amy Welborn. Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Illinois. 2003.