

FUSION Devo: Monday, March 2nd, 2009

Title: It Is a White Out!

Text: Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Yesterday was a Sunday. It wasn't just any Sunday. It was a rainy, cold, winter Sunday. I had just returned from a retreat with 40 7th graders. The weekend was great but it rained the entire trip and the temperature seemed to drop lower and lower every hour. We had an amazing weekend and it was certainly an adventure chasing a large group of wide-open 7th grade guys and girls around, but the weather certainly forces us to change our plans. Instead of enjoying the rock climbing wall, zip-line, high-ropes course, a tag football game and just hanging out enjoying the beautiful camp, we spent the weekend dodging ginormous mud puddles, slipping on ice covered decks and all of the other obstacles that came our way.

I was looking forward to getting to my house, taking a hot shower and just relaxing a little bit. But even then, as I pulled into my driveway I noticed that the rain had saturated everything there as well. There was mud everywhere and it was just plain nasty. Then to top things off, the rain turned to sleet and things got even worse. The local news began interrupting every television show to raise the "Freak Out" level of every viewer by telling of this huge winter storm that was about to slam Winston-Salem, NC. Of course, my attitude was "I'll believe it when I see it", and I just watched every news break with a high level of skepticism. And on top of that I was just a little ticked that the outside was already super nasty and if it snows it would just make things even nastier. So, I finally tuned off the TV and made my way to bed for a good night sleep.

I woke up this morning to the sound of my three children basically singing praises to God. Why? Well, during our night of slumber it had snowed. Not just a little bit of snow, but a pretty decent snow for North Carolina. It may not have been the "Storm of the Century" but it was enough. I walked down the steps and looked out the window of the front door and was amazed at the beauty. The sky was a beautiful shade of baby blue. The sunrays bounced brilliantly off of everything. The wind was blowing just enough to send tiny flakes of snow shimmering through the air like God had just sprinkled us with a bag of glitter. And in the midst of all of that I noticed something else. All of the mud and muck, all of the rain water and downed tree limbs had vanished. They were now covered with the most spectacular quilt of fluffy snow. I absolutely loved it. After a few minutes of just taking it all in, it was if God tapped me on the shoulder and whispered in my ear, "Steve, I do the same with your sin." And you know what? God sure does.

You see we tend to do a great job of making our lives so dirty, messing and nasty. If we think about it, our actions usually take us from the warm, safe and clean lap of the Creator and drops us smack in the middle of the mud and trash of this world. It is easy to get sucked into that world and eventually have the mindset that this is the best it can get. But that is not the case at all. God's love for us is so deep and so strong that no matter what we have done, no matter how sin-stained our lives get, God's love, mercy and the amazing gift of God's Grace is far more powerful and strong enough to clean away everything that separates us from the one that created us and sent his son to live, die and rise for us.

Grace is defined as a gift that one doesn't deserve to receive. And the truth is that we don't deserve such a wonderful and priceless gift. But God is so passionately in love with us that in the midst of the nasty, rain-soaked and muddy situations we put ourselves in the middle of, any time we turn to God and seek him, God will remove the crimson-red stains of our sin and make us white as snow. All we have to do is embrace God, confess our sin and let God do the rest.

Something to Think About:

- o Have you ever found yourself in the mud and muck of sin?
- o When you were there, how would you describe your relationship with God? And with others?
- o What did it feel like when God removed your stains and made you white as snow?
- o Do you know anyone else who is in the midst of the effects of this world?
- o How can God use you to reach them and help them out of that world?

A Few Minutes with God:

God, I thank you for your amazing grace and your passionate love of all your people. I praise you for your willingness to reach down and lift us out of the horrible and destructive situations we get ourselves into. Your love is strong enough to remove our sin. Your love is pure enough to bring us back to you. Help me to share that message with others who need to understand that you are there for them as well. I love you God. Amen.