

The Maiden and Her Rock Collection – dialogue

She was not sure how the collection of rocks began ... Perhaps from childhood or just because it felt So Right! But the Maiden had a collection of rocks that she carried with her in a backpack which was strapped over her shoulders and across her chest for easy access.

She added new ones from time to time. She often took them out to “display or exhibit” them for other to see. Each time she handled them, they seemed to grow heavier and larger in size. Others saw them as ugly and responded by backing away immediately when she brought them out. She saw them as objects that identified her in a unique way. The rock collection was called “Un-forgiveness.”

Soon the backpack was expanded to its limits. So she unpacked the rocks and placed them on a platform – some called it an altar – so that she could have quick access to them when needed. The problem was the rocks were so heavy, pushing them along the pathway of life was getting harder to do each day. She noticed that other folks on her pathway were moving along much faster and without a rock collection at all. She wondered about that. Her head was always down as she realized that her collection was draining her energy every day.

One day she paused to look about and saw some interesting things. She had been so busy with her rocks that she had failed to notice the loveliness of the surrounding along her pathway. There were flowers, trees, gentle water, mountains on one side, and ocean vistas on the other. There was a fragrant breeze that she had never noticed. These were wonderful things that were blocked from her view of life because of the rocks.

She was quite surprised to catch a glimpse of a building that sat beside the pathway she traveled. Funny, she had not taken the time to note the large sign on the top that read, “Exchange Center.” A clear view of the building had been hard to see because of the tall mound of dirt that ran along the side of the road. So she left her rocks in the road and scrambled over the dirt to get a better look. Then she saw the signs in the windows.

“Exchange your sin for salvation.” “Exchange your disobedience for the blessings of servanthood.” “Exchange your sorrows for the oil of joy.” But the one that she kept re-reading was the one that read: “Come to me, all you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

The owner was standing at the door.

“What are your hours?”

“I am here 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

“Have you never been away?”

“Yes, only once, many years ago. I was away from a Friday afternoon until Sunday morning. Since then, I have never left this doorway.”

“Oh, then I am glad to hear you are always available no matter what time of the day I want to talk to you. You see, I am exhausted from pushing my pile of rocks each day. I am interested in your exchange program. If I understand your sign, I can trade in all my rocks for peace in my life. Is that correct?”

“Yes”

“I will just leave them on the road over there and then you can haul them over here whenever you want to. How is that?”

“No, it does not work that way. You will have to bring each of them to me. You will need to forgive each of those that you think have wronged you. When you have confessed that sin of un-forgiveness, I will place a mantle of peace upon your shoulders.”

Well I didn’t know it was going to work that way... But as long as I am here I will just go get one of my rocks and exchange it right now.

“Ok I am back, I selected this rock of un-forgiveness because it was a long time ago. There was that woman at a PTA meeting that was rude to me. At the time I just would not forgive her – but, now I am ready to do that. I forgive her.”

“I am so happy to hear your confession. Here is your mantle of peace. I am placing it upon your shoulders. It will bring sweet release from that burden of un-forgiveness that you have carried for so long.”

“Wow, I do feel so much better. And my rock collection over there will be lighter, too.”

Each day she brought more and more of the rocks in her collection to the exchange center. And each day after confessing the un-forgiven rock, she received a new mantle of peace and rest. Soon she was down to the really large and heavy stones. She was not eager to exchange these for many reasons.

“I am down to the really heavy rocks now. Rocks I have had for a long time. They are so heavy. I don’t think I can drag them over that mound of dirt on the roadside. You know what I have nicknamed that dirt? I call it ‘pride.’”

“I noticed that you started to bring them to me several times but you turned back.”

“I know in my heart that I need to bring them to the exchange center.”

Finally with reluctance and with great effort, she moved the largest rock off the altar, over the “pride” mound to the front door of the center.

“Why have you kept this rock for such a long time? Did you not realize how much better your life would be if you brought this rock of un-forgiveness to me before?”

“I know that now... But pride kept me from doing that. And besides, I thought you didn’t know about it.”

“Oh, I’ve known about it a long time. I saw you pick up the rock the day you decided not to forgive. I saw it when you first put it into your backpack and I saw it when you made it the center piece of your altar.”

“I am so sorry, sir.”

“My name is Jesus. You are forgiven.”