**Toppling Statues...Who Can Stand?**

Based on [Luke 6:36-42](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk6.36-42)

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Fourth Sunday after Trinity

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We live in strange times. A few days ago was Canada Day, and yesterday was the American fourth of July. These are holidays meant to celebrate the origin and ideals of the nation. As you may know, there has risen a vocal counter-cultural movement of people who have been advocating tearing down statues that honor certain historical figures. For example, some have been criticizing Mount Rushmore in the state of South Dakota. Some want it to be, I don’t know, “taken down” because two of the former presidents were slaveholders. And they were slave holders, but that’s not why they are remembered there. They are there because of certain good qualities associated with the founding principles of the United States that they represent. But because they owned slaves, as did the christian Philemon, as did the OT Jews with God’s okay...they are to be condemned and toppled down.

I don’t bring up the monument issue for any political implications, but rather for it’s christian ones. If we must topple statues of men who owned slaves because owning slaves is evil, then what statues can remain standing? What is the standard for judging which men are righteous and which are not? As a christian and follower of Jesus Christ, you confess that every single human being that ever existed from the first man and woman to the last, is born sinful...born evil by nature. And you know that everyone--beginning with yourself--has sinned in thought word and deed. In the words of the King David, “***If you O Lord, kept a record of sins, o lord who could stand?***” No man, and certainly no statue of a man, would stand. But David continues, “**But with you [Lord] there is forgiveness.**”

Everyone should be thankful, because we have a loving and forgiving God that will not destroy all men because of their sins. So Christ says “Be merciful, as your heavenly father is merciful.” or “Judge not, lest ye be judged.” and “Get the speck out of your own eye first.”  **It was King David who wrote the Psalm about no man having an ability to remain standing before God.** He himself was a polygamist, yet we don’t--and scripture doesn’t--make that the feature of who he was. He was an adulterer and a murderer, who repented and though his sins are remembered for history, that is not who he is, because he was a forgiven sinner, who prayed even as we would pray “Lord, declare me innocent of hidden faults.” But who knows, maybe there will be a call to tear down Michaelangelo’s David yet.

But again, this is not about statues. I personally don’t have strong feelings about statues of men, per se. But as a Christian you have to ask, if all men are sinners, and if the record of their sins was laid bare for all to see and know no one would be guitless, then why be so picky? Why not tear down every statue? And the reason has to be that, even for today’s “cancel culture,” some *flawed men* (but I repeat myself), some *flawed men* should have statues that remain. Who? Why? By what standard or measure do you say some evil men are good enough to be honored, and others evil men are not?

Jesus says, Judge not, and you will not be judged...for the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. This means that if you reserve for yourself the right to pick and choose which sins to condemn others for--others have the right to pick and choose which sins to condemn you for. What a wicked and ugly arrangement that is. Because you know what people do...they pick sins that they don’t commit as the worst; and overlook their own sins as not being that bad.

Jesus teaches that hypocrisy is not allowed. You cannot plea for mercy yourself while condemning others. The measure you use will be measured back to you. By what measure do we weigh men? For which men do we build monuments and for which men do we topple them down? I don’t have a political answer on that, but I do have a biblical one. Be merciful, do not judge, and be careful because sin is sin and if you judge that all sinners need to be razed to the ground, you will go with them.

No the measure to be used, and that will be used by your merciful Lord, is repentance for your sins. And we should be clear here, ***you are not responsible to repent for anyone’s sin but their own***. No, you are not guilty for the sins of your ancestors unless you have participated in that sin yourself. And this is not up for reasonable disagreement among christians. God says, ***20*** *The person who sins will die. A son will not be punished for his father’s sins, and a father will not be punished for his son’s sins. The righteousness of the righteous person will be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked person will be his own.*

Jesus Christ preaches mercy and that we are to turn the other cheek. We are to think and speak well of our neighbor. Jesus says today, in teaching about mercy...With the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. If your measure is condemnation of all who have ever done anything wrong, you will be measured in that way. That is looking to the law for justification, and no one is righteous, not one. Well, there is one, Jesus Christ, who’s statue could stand. He was the only one who was measured by the law and found righteous. He died for the sins of the whole world, and yet death could not hold him because he kept the law of God perfectly. He is the only righteous one, and if anyone is to be saved, it must be through admitting their own sins, and fleeing to him for salvation.