

## Michael's David, His Living Stones

By Michael Clark

"Yes," Jesus was saying to me, "I did choose you just as you were, but not to leave you that way. As I carve away these pieces of deformed rock, you feel the pain and identify with them as being part of you. Can't you see that this is not the you that I created you to be? The world, the sins of your fathers, and your sin have deformed you from reflecting my image. Since you surrendered to me I have been cutting away at all those layers that have been hiding my image from being seen in you."

Several years ago, I heard a story of how the great Italian artist, Michelangelo, came to choose a piece of stone to carve his famous statue of David. I had forgotten all about it until one day the Lord reminded me about it. I had been struggling through a series of trials for some time and I finally cried out to God, "What is it with you? Why can't you ever stop trying to remake me? Didn't you accept me 'Just As I Am'?" His answer was in the following story.

It seems that Michelangelo was well known among the merchants of Italy in those days because he had a Papal commission to do his works of art for the Vatican. In short he had the big bucks behind him. The merchants were all over themselves trying to please him with their wares, but the artist was a hard one to impress. He had gone through all the stone shops of that part of Italy looking for a stone out of which to carve this now famous statue and had turned down all the finest pieces of marble that they had to offer.

He wasn't one to give up easily, so he decided to give it another try, but this time he requested to see the rejected pieces that had been pushed into anonymity in the backs of the stone shops. Soon he found what he was looking for. In the back of one of the shops under years of dust, shoved into a lonely corner was a stone that had an obvious flaw in it. This is the one that the great sculptor chose.

The stone merchant was beside himself, "You have seen hundreds of pieces of marble in all of these shops and all of them are of greater quality than this one. Why have you chosen such an inferior stone to carve your statue from?" His answer was

simple, yet to the point, "I have chosen this one, because this one is the one with David in it!"

"Yes," Jesus was saying to me, "I did choose you just as you were, but not to leave you that way. As I carve away these pieces of deformed rock, you feel the pain and identify with them as being part of you. Can't you see that this is not the you that I created you to be? The world, the sins of your fathers, and your sin have deformed you from reflecting my image. Since you surrendered to me I have been cutting away at all those layers that have been hiding my image from being seen in you."

Later, I was telling a sister in the Lord about this new realization I had received. She listened attentively, smiled, and her comment I will never forget. She said. "Do you know what is most interesting about your story? There are five statues that Michelangelo carved that still have pieces of rock hanging on them, but enough is carved away that you can see that there was a person inside. Do you know what these works of his are called?" I told her I did not. "They are called The Captives!"



In Luke chapter four is the following story:

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,  
 Because He has anointed Me  
 To preach the gospel to the poor;  
 He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
 To proclaim liberty to the captives  
 And recovery of sight to the blind,  
 To set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He

began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21, NKJV)

Many of us are still carrying around "baggage" from our youth and from the evils that the men of this world have done to us. This so-called baggage is not who we are in Christ. As a result of its presence we often get more rejection from mankind. But the worst rejection--and often the most confusing--is when we are rejected for who Christ is IN us, and this often happens in Churches. Don't be dismayed; it happened to Him as well.

As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:2-5, NKJV)

Yes, Jesus loves you the way you are, but he loves you too much to let you stay that way. The way we see ourselves is more often not the way He sees us in the eye of eternity. His perfecting work in us will continue until the day He appears. He is so wonderful.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1Jo 3:2 NKJV)

I find this very wonderful and exciting. There is so much to look forward to in His kingdom. Don't look back, but fix your eye on that high calling that is yours in Christ.