

Wonderful and beloved brothers and sisters:

Have you ever felt "as dumb as a post"? I had a friend who, when referring to some people would say, "That fellow is dumber than a sack of hammers!" One hot summer afternoon as we were recessing out of a particularly hot ordination service with perspiration having saturated our clerical garb right out through our Albs he was heard to say that we all looked like we "had been rode hard and put away wet!"

Time after time his fellow pastors would be reduced to tears of laughter by his "down home" expressions usually said with affection but always to the point. One of my favourites was "that fellow don't know come here from sic' um" when he referred to a person with little understanding of a situation.

Colloquial speech is commonly used to get a point across when clear statements might be too hard to swallow or not germane to the situation. Imagine the reaction of those around Jesus when He said: *"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"* (Matthew 7:3) Jesus used this grotesque hyperbole to demonstrate how absurd it was for us to pick out the sins of others when we have not repented of our own.

Here our dear Lord is telling us how the relationship we have with fellow Christians ought to be carried out day by day. The way we tend to be blind to our own shortcomings and failures is made very clear by the picture language that describes a beam stuck in one's eye. For what Jesus has to say is remarkable because it isn't possible to have a literal beam in one's literal eye. This shows that it is bizarre to criticize or find fault with a friend without full and humble awareness of one's own faults.

We need to be as humble as we can be when approaching another Christian, and we need to be slow to criticize. As our dear Saviour shows us it is no light matter to rebuke a

brother or sister; always approach one another in humility and love, with an eye to one's own defects and sins. To hypocritically judge or condemn anyone is risky business. You can put yourself in a bad place. You risk end-time judgement and condemnation from God.

"She is not the brightest light in the string" sounds like a humorous put-down with very little consequence but, the One who turns on all the lights has a need for the dull as well as the bright light on the string. The Lord wants us to look at each other in humble service, even when our fellow Christians have sinned and need a loving call to repentance.

Hard to do you say? Not to worry. The motivation and the power for such an attitude comes from Jesus and His promise of the Father's care. His redeeming love because of the Son He sent into the world to deal with all our sins in the first place sustains us day by day and guides us in the way of forgiveness and love.

Rejoicing in His days
Pastor Krestick

