

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

June 1, 2020



Belshazzar's Feast, Rembrandt

Rebuffed: Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out

An oft-quoted text when I was a kid was this:

...and be sure your sin will find you out (Numbers 32:23)

The verse was used (incorrectly) to impress on us that someone will find out about your sin, sooner or later. It worked. Sure enough, more often than not, you thought you got away with it, and your mom or dad would “find you out.”

This phenomenon didn't stop when I left home. I've mentioned before that I was a platoon guide — a temporary sergeant — for the last few weeks of Army Basic Training and that came with considerable responsibility. One of my main roles was to make sure our platoon barracks (i.e., living space) was spotless at all times. That meant, among other things, making sure the black floor was spotless — even shiny.

The final major inspection of the company was coming up at the end of our 8 weeks and a battalion commander would be doing the inspection. This was a big deal. If the company wasn't in top shape, the company commander would pay the price, and that “price” would be paid by the platoon lieutenant and the platoon sergeant and the platoon guide (that was me).

The inspection included our general appearance as a unit, our weapons (clean and ready to fire), our personal appearance (clean shaven, spotless uniforms, spit-shined boots) and our barracks. That last one presented a problem.

The other two platoons in our company had floor wax buffers but ours was broken. Since this was a competition, neither of the other platoons let us borrow theirs; there was no way to achieve a shiny black floor without a buffer.

Of course, we were disgusted with the other platoons. We sat around grousing about this, berating them and generally bemoaning our fate. Without a buffer we were doomed to finish third in the inspection and would bear the consequences.

To this day, the steps we took to solve this problem amaze me. There was a buffer in the headquarters office nearby. Three of us decided we could sneak in there, grab the buffer, buff our

floor, and put it back before anyone knew. But we needed a pickup to get it. Somehow, one of our squad leaders was able to “procure” one, which made us wonder what he did before he was drafted. Somehow, we got the keys to the HQ office, opened the door, grabbed the buffer, buffed our floor, and got it back in the HQ office, without being caught. We breathed a collective sigh of relief and felt we had a good chance of winning the inspection competition. And, we did — by a landslide.

A couple of days later the three of us who “acquired” the buffer were called into the Captain's office. We thought we were getting a medal for our outstanding performance in the inspection. We walked into the office, saluted and stood at attention. The Captain said “at ease.” He then took out a large book and began turning the pages. It was the *Uniform Code of Military Justice*. He began reading the section on grand theft, the details of the charge and the sentence — prison time in the stockade for... I was too shocked to hear anything after that.

He closed the book and stared at us one at a time. He lingered as he stared at me since I was the “highest ranking” temporary enlisted man in the platoon. I felt like Belshazzar when he saw the writing on the wall.

Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. *Daniel 5:6*
We were contemplating our crime and doing prison time, scared out of our wits, when the Captain said, “what you did was a crime. You could be court marshaled for stealing the pickup and the buffer.” Then he paused... we were horrified.

After a long couple of minutes, he said, “I'm not going to charge you. It was wrong, but I appreciate your initiative. Just don't do anything like this again.”

We saluted about 10 times each, and kept saying, “yes sir, right sir, never again sir...” and meekly left the office.

After that, I never forgot: “*be sure your sin will find you out*” — even if it was used out of context.