

Wounded Peaches (June 2011)

Many suffer serious injury in the process called "life." For some, their pain is visible to the world. Others suffer more privately--like wounded peaches.

Following a year of serious drought and an unusually cold winter, this spring has been a wonderful balance of refreshing rain and balmy temperatures. There has been just the right combination of moisture and warmth for productive fruit trees and high-yield gardens. Peaches are an agricultural favorite of the Texas Hill Country and, like many other folks; we have a peach tree on our place. (If you have a bit of acreage in the country, it is called a "place.")

An abundant crop, such as this year's, could not be allowed to go to waste so I decided to make peach preserves. Canning is most certainly a social activity. Peeling peaches alone is a wearisome task. Feeling more than a little sorry for myself, I allowed my mind to wander.

Most of the peaches were fuzzy with a warm red color on the side which had been exposed to the sun. The fruit was juicy and fragrant, falling away from the pit as I sliced through the firm pulp. However, some peaches had been damaged by insects and I began to notice a pattern of injury.

Insects, looking for a place to lay their eggs, had pierced the surface leaving a weeping wound behind. This kind of damage could be easily removed since the majority of the peach was unaffected.

The impact of insects that sting the fruit, however, was almost impossible to detect from the outside. The texture was a little hard, but the color and fragrance were inviting. There were no gaping wounds. It was not until I began peeling and slicing that the damaging marks were exposed--clumps of hard red strands like leathery cords ran from the surface to the core making the peaches useless. I had to throw them away.

What a waste! What a disappointment!

I began to realize that people are often like those wounded peaches. Many suffer serious injury in the process called "life." For some, the pain is visible to the world--loss of a loved one, personal or family illness, and a physical or emotional handicap, the loss of a job or a home. These wounds ooze for a while and may leave a lasting scar, but they eventually heal over without destroying the whole person. This kind of pain stirs a sense of compassion in the hearts of others, producing a desire to help and console the wounded ones.

Others, however, suffer more privately. On the surface everything seems beautiful and placid. But the interior damage is severe. They have become

hardened to life by the impact of physical, verbal or sexual abuse. They have experienced infidelity, divorce, financial difficulties, and lack of self control or depression--the types of things which are taboo for open discussion. Because these wounds never have a chance to bleed (ooze) they produce hardness and inflexibility. The goodness of life becomes so attached to the "pit" that the person loses hope and begins to believe they are useless.

But God can heal both kinds of wounds. He can turn the gaping wound into a good report of HIS healing power. HE can soften the tough attachment to protective self-centeredness by teaching us to give up our lie-based thinking and cling to the truth. Stinging circumstances do not have to control our lives if we are walking with him. He can heal our wounds as we learn to trust him enough to choose him as the source of our hope.

Philippians 1:18-19 Yes, and I continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.