

SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET?

Scripture Reading: Read Matthew chapter 1

Skeletons in the closet! The term refers to secrets from our past that we are afraid others might discover. This is illustrated well in the following article that first appeared in the Washington Post, June 16, 1901:

I heard Dr. Conan Doyle tell a good story during a trip I made to London last winter," said George D. Aldrich at the Arlington last night. "He said that at a dinner party he had attended the guests began discussing the daily discoveries made to the detriment of people occupying high stations in life and enjoying the confidence of the business world. Dr. Doyle said that it had always been his opinion that there was a skeleton in the closet of every man who had reached the age of forty. This led to a lot of discussion, some of the guests resenting the idea that there was no one who had not in his past something that were better concealed. As a result of the controversy, Dr. Doyle said, it was suggested that his views as to family skeletons be put to the test. The diners selected a man of their acquaintance whom all knew only as an upright Christian gentleman, whose word was accepted as quickly as his bond and who stood with the highest in every respect. 'We wrote a telegram saying 'All is discovered; flee at once' to this pillar of society,' said Dr. Doyle, 'and sent it. He disappeared the next day and has never been heard from since.

Sadly, like the gentleman in this story, our "skeletons" often provide the power to keep us chained in fear of being exposed. What if we are discovered? What if the truth be told? In the opening chapter of his gospel, Matthew provides us with the genealogy of Jesus that reveals many family skeletons in his family line: an ancestor (Judah) who had a one-night stand with his daughter-in-law (Tamar) by whom she became pregnant with a son (Perez); a harlot who belonged to the immoral Canaanite people (Rahab); a foreigner (Ruth the Moabitess) who came from a people who were produced by an incestuous one-night stand between Lot and his daughter; a king (David) who had an adulterous relationship with the wife one of his top generals and then covered it up by having him murdered. Christ still came in spite of all their sins. He redeemed their lives and turned their history into His story...a story of redemption and grace for sinners like us, where our past meets his forgiveness and we are given a new start and the possibility of a brand new future.

Action Step: What are the skeletons in your closet that you are afraid someone might discover? How do they affect your ability to serve the Lord? Take a few minutes right now and write them down on a piece of paper. After praying in step 4 below, tear up the piece of paper and throw it away (*or safely burn it as an offering to God!*)

Prayer Focus: Confess those skeletons to God in prayer and ask him to forgive your sins by his blood, redeem your past by his grace and give you a dream for 2012 by his Spirit.

Take-a-way: *Past skeletons can't stop future dreams when you place your faith in the ever-present Savior!*