

## 9-18-24 – It's a Shell of a Life

Parables. Sea shells. Fav pastime. Each are so different . . . like people.

- **Some shells look perfect**, none are. They appear hard, but are **fragile**.
  - **2 Cor. 4:6-7** – For God said, “**Let there be light in the darkness,**” and He “**has made this light shine in our hearts . . . We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure.**”
  - **People aren't perfect**. . . we all have imperfections. You can't find a parent, best friend, spouse or partner who is perfect. **Fragile**.

Seashells are **created** by Mollusks. Brings in Calcium Carbonate from water.

Climate change - less pH, less carbonate available.

People create shells as well. Create façades...image...

**Hide** under them – avoid being discovered.

- “**Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight; everything is uncovered and exposed before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**” – **Heb. 4:13**
  - We don't hide from God, and we **hurt ourselves** by hiding from each other. Only 1 under the shell. Lonely existence.
    - It's **not good** to be alone. We were created 4 community

You can't be **fully loved** until you are **fully known**.

- To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial.
- To be known and not loved is our greatest fear.
  - God fully knows us, and truly loves us.
  - **Psalm 139** – “O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. <sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. <sup>3</sup>You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. <sup>4</sup>You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. <sup>5</sup>You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head.”
    - We're loved - & blessed - by the One who knows us best.
- To be fully known & loved is what every person needs more than anything. **We can only love like that thru God.**

- “We love each other because He loved us first.” – 1 Jn 4:19
- That kind of Love **frees** us from pretense, **humbles** us from self-righteousness, and **fortifies** us for any difficulty life can throw at us.
  - And yes, we’ll have challenges/difficulties.

Some shells have spines – for protection.

- Some try to **protect** themselves . . . don’t need anyone/anything.
- “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”
- **Prov. 4:22**

**Context:** King Solomon was saying put truth & wisdom in heart;  
– stay away from deceit; corrupt speech, perverse talk, lies.

**Protect** from that – not people to love.

- Our lives are shaped by what we think.
- We don’t get maturity & perfection by avoiding problems or heartache.
- It’s the trying of our faith – the battles & storms that make us.
- “Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” – **James 1:4**
  - That doesn’t happen when we try to shield ourselves from the very situations God sends & uses.

Conch shell is beautiful on the inside. Has an iridescent shine,

- **Romans 12:9** – “Let love be w/o hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good.”
  - **Greek word for hypocrite** - used for actor who wore a mask. Best actors/ actresses live life with their masks on.
  - Fake it, “How you doing?” **Why?** Worried that people won’t love them unless they wear a mask.
  - Bible urges Christians: build community where it’s safe for people to take their masks off.
    - God loves us, for us. Love each other same way.

Shells are found when they have been washed up on beaches.

At the mercy of ocean currents. Some live that way... aimless.

- God had a plan for our lives – a purpose for everything.
  - “Your eyes saw my unformed body; all my days were written in Your book and ordained for me before one of them came to be.” – **Psm 139:16**
  - A plan for **Jeremiah** - “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” – **Jer. 1:5**
  - Plan for **Paul**, - “even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace” to preach to the Gentiles. **Gal. 1:15–16**
- **God the potter** made us / an assignment. A purpose.
- By finding a shell on the beach, it’s been **separated** from it’s host.
- Shells, like people, are **broken**. Life tosses us around. Battered by waves. Leave the ocean earlier than others. . .
  - **Rom. 8:38** – “that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.” NLT
  - Jesus was **sent** “to heal the brokenhearted” – Isa. 61:1.
    - We find Lasting comfort in His love.

**Every shell has a story**, so does every person.

- Hole in shells caused by predators. Drill in to get to the mollusk.
- Mollusks actually prey on other mollusks.
  - Our stories matter.