

The Easter Egg

When I was about 12 or 13 years old we went to Grandmother Margaret's house for Easter. I wore a special "Easter" yellow and pink striped sport coat (*I was a spiffy dresser you know*). My mother was going through this phase where she had to frost hair. She did her own, the neighbors and friends and yes, even mine. So there I stood with my blond frosted hair, in my yellow and pink coat listening to my Aunt Renie tell everyone to say "*tee, hee, hee*" as she looked into the viewer of her ancient Brownie camera for that year's memory.

Recently I found that old picture among a host of others in a box brought from the old farm before it was sold. I had a sudden, vivid visualization of that day. Scientists tell us that our olfactory sense is perhaps the strongest stimulant of our memory receptors. When I saw that picture I smelled something . . . something rotten!

After church we all lined up for our family pictures. One after the other, each of the aunts, uncles, cousins, parents and siblings all said "*tee, hee, hee*" while their image was committed to the posterity of film. Following a huge dinner the adults retired to the living room or porch to rest after the events of the day. We kids however were just getting wound up!

Grandmother had made a large basket of colored Easter eggs for some of the more energetic adults to hide for us kids. We had to wait in the house while they went all around the yard and barns to hide them. Finally, after about ten minutes they let us loose!

I, being older, politely overlooked the obvious eggs in plain view. They were for the "little ones", and besides that, when I picked one up (*merely for inspection purposes*), everyone on the porch yelled at me. As I sulked away in search of the more elusive eggs, I found I had wandered over near the grape arbors.

The grape arbors were over next to an old storage shed across the road from the neighbors' farm. I spied a bright blue egg and went to retrieve it. As I reached into the edge of the overgrown arbor I saw three of the biggest eggs I had ever seen. They were brown with black spots on them, each about the size of an oval shaped baseball. Jackpot!

Now, because we only raised chickens, I had never seen a turkey egg. Here was a long abandoned nest from one of our neighbors' turkeys. I say abandoned, because when I grabbed for the first one it broke open when I lifted it. What followed was a cascade of events!

I do not know if you have ever had the "pleasure" of smelling a rotten turkey egg, but I assure you, it is a smell not soon forgotten. As the slimy gray yellow rotten juice splashed all over my hands, I lost my balance and fell into the nest. I must

have temporarily lost my sense of newly acquired manhood because I began to scream like a little girl. This in turn brought an entire group of family members to my rescue. What they discovered must have been a sight! There I stood crying in my yellow and pink sport coat, with rotten turkey egg dripping from my face and hands like some gray, yellow mucus from an alien in outer space.

At first one of my older cousins grabbed me up in her arms and exclaimed to everyone that I had some terrible accident and to call the doctor. Then she got a whiff . . . a close one! Even though she was at a distance, I remember my grandmother exclaiming, "*Lordy! He's done got into some rotten eggs!*" Did you ever stink so bad that you could not stand even smelling yourself? I began to get sick, which only added to the aromatic presence of my current situation. In the end, everyone had a great laugh at my expense, even me!

You say, Howard, what on earth does this have to do with spiritual things? Well, let me get to that.

After I was cleaned up and given the lecture on not messing with rotten turkey eggs (*which I am proud to say was learned with absolute and utter fulfillment to this very day*), I sat in the kitchen with my grandmother. I felt kind of bad and embarrassed, so I asked her to forgive me for the mess I made. At the time I didn't think it profound, but I do now upon reflection. She put her arm around me and said, "*Everybody gets into a little rotten eggs sometimes, and it stinks to high heaven. But don't you forget that it goes away if you clean it up real good. Just like right now.*" She smiled at me, gave me a piece of lemon meringue pie, and I somehow felt the best I had felt all that Easter day.

Sometimes in our spiritual life we get into a nest of old rotten eggs; like gossip, poor and often sinful choices, hurt feelings and wrong words spoken in pain or anger. And yes, we "*stink to high heaven*", as my grandmother so eloquently put it. So how do we clean it up?

1st John 1:9 says, "*If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" The word "confess" means "*to agree with.*" You can't tell God anything He does not already know, so what you are doing is "*agreeing*" with Him about the "*stink*" of sin in your life. Believe me, just as my grandmother recognized the stench of those rotten eggs so many years ago, God recognizes sin in our lives, and just like my Grandmother Margaret, He always lovingly and patiently waits to "*cleanse us.*"

Easter is about new life, a new beginning in Christ. So, if you find yourself smelling something that's not right in your life, don't walk around too long with egg on your hands and face. Ask Jesus to clean it up!

Pastor Howard