

When I was in boot camp, I was made the division Yeoman – that means, I was supposed to keep track of the division’s paperwork, and keep the office clean. One day, the division commanders told me to clean up the office, and indicated the coffee pot area, too. This was a sign of great trust, since as a recruit, I wasn’t supposed to drink coffee. But I went to work, and cleaned up the tabletop, and the pots and the Mr. Coffee machine. I even went so far as to get all the stains out of the glass pot. After I had the area sparkling, I looked at the cups that were sitting there. Inside each one of them was a layer of black slime and stain. Feeling energetic in my cleaning, I went to work on the cups, and after some effort, they were sparkling like new.

I moved on to other work, and later in the day the division commanders came back. I saw them go into the office, and when I was called in; I expected to be praised for a job well-done. Instead I was in trouble. It seems that they were none too happy. You see, that layer of slime and stain, for them, was a sign of their history and time in the Navy. Collectively they had between them about 50 years of history – and 50 years of slime – that I had managed to eradicate through one act of cleaning.

Sometimes, that’s how life can be. On the outside, everything looks OK. To all appearances, we are doing just fine. But on the inside, there may be something unseen that needs cleaning up.

We’re all in the same shape, to be sure. We’re all working on fixing what ails us ... giving it over to God in Christ so that we can be made whole by the Healer of our Souls.

But, I’m also pretty sure that there are some things that we cling to ... aspects of our personalities or attitudes we embrace ... that we don’t want to let go of. Yet, these pieces of our own “history” may be keeping us from a closer relationship to God. And like the caked on slime and stains in those coffee cups, we’re not too eager to have it cleaned out.

Yet, that is often what we need.

So, let us pray that God may shine the light of His grace on any aspects of our lives, or attitudes of mind, or ingrained habits, that may be keeping us from a closer walk with Him. And that we be given the grace to let go, and let God clean out any ‘history’ that may not be of God, so that we might grow to be more of the people He has called us to be in Christ through the Holy Spirit.