

REACHING YOUR POTENTIAL

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, January 08, 2006

Galatians 3:23-29 *Now before faith came; we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore, the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; **for all of you are one in Christ Jesus ~ and if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.***



**“My sheep hear my voice.
I know them, and
they follow me.”**

- John 10:27

John 10:1-10 *“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.**”*

Still in high school, but already madly in love with Tienka, early one Saturday morning, while riding my bicycle, nothing else to do, I decided to surprise her, to see how she's doing. I arrived at the worst possible moment for her. She was still in her night robe and was just doing her hair. It was a very awkward moment. There was nothing she could do but try to make light of the situation, so she asked, “Well? How do you like my hair?” I was also at a loss for words. I said, “It looks as if it's about to become something wonderful.” We both laughed and the day was saved. I guess that was the day that I first discovered the need not to look at a situation as it appears but to focus on the potential. I was right. I wish you could see her when her hair was completely done!

Highlighting the potential is the oldest trick in the book when it comes to advertising! Have you heard this one before? “Be, all you can be! Join the Army!” Off course, you have. All of us have heard this slogan a thousand times. Many young people believe these words - only to discover that it is not so easy to be - all you can be! In spite of all the exercises, all the classes and all the discipline, many of the young recruits still go astray and land in bad situations, ruining their own lives and the lives of others. You see - to be all you can be - has very little to do with strict discipline, enforced from the outside, or by learning - or by dieting - or by exercising. The potential to be all you can be has everything to do with

your very own inner state of mind.

Long ago Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly". Jesus Christ can make men and women all that they can possibly be! Today's scripture says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek ... slave nor free ... neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." We are all one in the Church. In the fellowship of believers, we make no distinction between rich or poor, royalty or commoner. It makes no difference who you are, where you came from or what you have. You are a human being, to be loved and recognized.

There are no "superiors" in God's world, nor are there "inferiors." There are only people. Precious people! People talented in various ways! Some are princes while others are still prodigals. Nevertheless, all are people with potential, because they have been fashioned by the Creator. That makes each one remarkably valuable. That is why Paul reminds us that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

That is why it is absurd to divide people into acceptable and unacceptable, "our kind" and "not our kind." What is there in us that make us classify people into groups and to judge some groups as being more acceptable than others are?

Why must we always categorize people into groups? Why are we so hung up on those things that divide us? In addition, why do we demean some groups -- even to the point of persecution? To have the mind of Christ is to value every one of God's children. No excuses, no "yes or buts," every one!

To have the mind of Christ is to see another's potential. Jesus warned us against being like the ungrateful servant, cautioned us not to be like the older brother, and admonished us for often having an attitude like the first laborers hired for the vineyard. He taught us not to throw the first stone, to take the log out of our own eye before we notice the speck in the eye of our neighbor, and to pray for those who persecute us. He instructed us to turn the other cheek, forgive seventy times seven, and go the extra mile. He taught us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to do unto others as we would wish them to do unto us, and when entering a room to sit at the modest end of the table.

Each of us has a special gift and talent to be recognized and respected. Each of us has a contribution to make without which we would all be less. Each of us has a unique potential. To have the mind of Christ is to see another's potential. Even more important, it is not to condemn but to encourage one another as Christ encourages us.

Here we are very close to the heart of our Christian faith. Christ came into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. When we condemn another for whatever reason, we are not of the mind of Christ. We are to encourage as Christ encourages us. If we hold that principle always before us, we shall see mountains move. They shall know that we are Christians by our love.

Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." Be all you can be! Your God knows your potential! Christ offers true life, in abundance!

Large streams from little fountains flow,

Tall oaks from little acorns grow!

AMEN