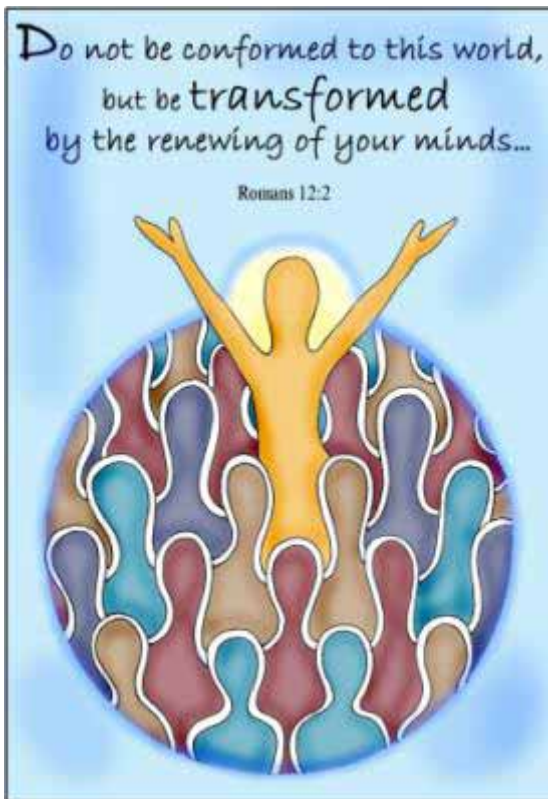


RENEWING YOUR MIND

Dr. Fred Fourie ~Sunday, September 09, 2007



Romans 12:1-3 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Luke 19: 1 – 10 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because

he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

One day, during the pioneering years of space travel, Werner Von Braun, rocket engineer and leading authority on space, gave a speech. During question time, a dear elderly woman stood up and asked, "Why can't we forget about all these new-fangled ideas about going out into space and rather be content to stay at home and watch television like the good Lord intended?"

NASA's Galileo spacecraft made breathtaking discoveries about the giant planet Jupiter until it plunged into Jupiter's crushing atmosphere on Sept. 21, 2003. NASA named this Mission "Galileo" in honor of the Italian Renaissance scientist Galileo Galilei, who discovered Jupiter's major moons in 1610. Who was this Galileo Galilei? Well, for starters, the Medieval Catholic Church officially condemned him on a charge of heresy! The Church wrongly convicted Galileo because of his conclusion that the Earth rotates round the sun. On 31

October 1992, 350 years after Galileo's death, Pope John Paul II gave an address on behalf of his Church in which he admitted that the Church was wrong in its case against Galileo.

For some, letting go of **outdated beliefs and superstitions** is usually difficult if not impossible. Unbelievably, we are still hearing **voices of condemnation** originating from fundamentalist Christian quarters against the most profound **advances in scientific knowledge**.

The medieval church often claimed to be speaking for God. Today it is common knowledge that they were often dead wrong! In many instances their interpretations was **nothing but a medieval understanding of God**. They believed that God spoke ~ long ago in history ~ and then fell silent leaving it to them to be the **only credible witnesses** as to what, where and when God spoke. Today we know how wrong they often were and how wrong we are when we believe that only our version of truth is really from God while we are convinced that other's versions are not.

Galileo's experience was not the first in history. The church leaders in the time of Jesus **were in opposition to the Jesus-teachings** that described God as a loving and forgiving parent. It was standard practice in **the church of Jesus' times** to condemn tax collectors like Zacchaeus and to isolate them from the community. It was custom **to roll up the welcome mat** whenever one of them approached.

Jesus told them that God was still speaking. He challenged their perceptions of God's will and God's justice as being fossilized, out of date, and wrong. Something earth shattering happened that day in Jericho. Jesus broke the mold of isolation and condemnation and went into a sinner's home. When Jesus finally emerged from that sinner's home he declared, "**Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.**"

The only way for the Scribes and Pharisees to discern the will of God, was to rethink their antiquated prejudice and rejection. Not only they – but also someone like Zacchaeus was part of God's People.

Much later, another son of Abraham, the Apostle Paul, would appeal to Christians of all times: Re-examine your mind – and your mind-set and do not be a victim of your own fossilized perceptions of truth. Paul wrote, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern the will of God— what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Always return to the FOUNTAIN OF TRUTH ~ God is still speaking; there is **no reason to rest easy with what previous generations concluded**.

I believe that God is still speaking.

I believe that Jesus lived and taught the way to the heart of God!

I believe that we must always ask, as if for the first time what Jesus would do.

If you really want to hear, what God is saying through Jesus Christ, Keep Jesus Christ in mind! For us, Jesus is still the ideal of what a true, vital, and meaningful life can and should be like. Keep your eyes on the Master.

Allow me a personal moment to say a heartfelt “thank you.” Exactly six years ago, I stood in this pulpit for the first time. Since then, I have come to love, know, respect, and appreciate so many of God’s people in our midst. I have clearly recognized Jesus Christ in your acceptance, in your openness, in your generosity, in your love and service. Let us continue seeking together to discern the true will God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Our search is not yet over – the journey continues ...

- I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day.
- I would rather have someone walk with me than merely tell the way.
- You can preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips.

“Spirit, spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free. Spirit, spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea! You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes, from the bondage of sorrow the captives dream dreams. Our women see visions, our men clear their eyes. With bold new decisions your people arise.”

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AMEN



God has poured out his
love into our hearts

Romans 5:5