

Friday, February 19

Today's Reading: Matthew Chapter 3

Today's Devotional Message is by Pastor Don Moorman

In those days John the Baptist began preaching in the Judean wilderness. His message was, [2] "Turn from your sins and turn to God, because the Kingdom of Heaven is near." Matthew 3:1-2 (NLT)

John the Baptist is here calling for transformation--and not just cosmetic transformation either. Some think that spiritual transformation means you stop doing bad things and start doing good things--and it does but it starts at a much deeper level. "Turn away from you sins and turn to God", often translated "repent", really means "to change the way you think." Not just to change what you think about but change the structure of your thinking, how you go about the process of thinking about everything.

Anthropologists tell us that the structure of our thinking is shaped so early in life that most of us can't even explain why we process things the way we do. They call it part of our "unconscious culture," the part of our culture so deeply embedded in us that we think it's hardwired into all people, not shaped by our environment. But it isn't hardwired; it's shaped and can be changed, but not easily. To change the way you think means that you look deeply inside yourself and challenge all your assumptions about life, all your ways of reflecting about life, all your ways of making decisions in every area of your life.

And this is what Lent is all about; looking deeply into your life and welcoming God into the deepest recesses of your soul; asking God to show you new ways of reflecting, new ways of thinking and, ultimately, new ways of living.

How do you get started with this all-important process. I recommend reading the Bible. While the Bible shows people being their worst, it also shows how God responds to the worst people can be. God's response is where you see how God thinks, how God processes things, how He makes decisions that lead to His actions towards us. Find these "God response" sections of the Bible. There are many of them scattered throughout the Bible and some of them are in the Gospel of Matthew that we're reading this Lent. Open your heart to God's way of thinking. Let God get involved in the way you think. New thinking will lead to new living and new living will open you to a whole new experience of God. That experience will lift your life to a new level and from that new level you'll see all of life differently and soon you'll be living it differently too.

Prayer: Loving Lord, I need change, deeper change than in the past, I've thought I've needed. I'm open, looking forward to letting your way of thinking become my way of thinking. Give me the openness and courage for this change, in Jesus' name. Amen

