

June 19, 2016

TIME OF REFLECTION

“It is never too late to be what you might have been.”

~George Eliot (1819-1880), aka Mary Ann Evans, English novelist and poet

“Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning.”

~Desmond Tutu, retired South African Bishop

“...in silence [I] read the paragraph on which my eyes first fell: ‘Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ...’ [Romans 13:13]. I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away.”

~Augustine (354-430), North African bishop,
on the moment of his conversion to Christ

“At last meditating day and night, by the mercy of God, I ... began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith.... Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open.”

~Martin Luther (1483-1546), founder of the Protestant branch of Christianity

“The first instance that I remember of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, 1 Tim. 1:17, ‘Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever, Amen.’ As I read the words, there came into my soul, and...diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before.”

~Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), president of Princeton, mentor of Eleazar Wheelock,
and key leader in New England Congregationalism

“Among us you will find uneducated persons, craftsmen, and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth. They do not rehearse speeches, but exhibit good works; when struck, they do not strike again; when robbed, they do not go to law; they give to those that ask of them, and love their neighbors as themselves.”

~*A Plea for the Christians* (A.D. 177), by Athenagoras,
a Christian and philosopher, written to the Roman Emperor

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “Begotten by the Father to a Living Hope” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGES – *selected passages*

1 Peter 1 (NASB)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials... ⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

²³ for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For,

“All flesh is like grass,
And all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
And the flower falls off,

²⁵ But the word of the Lord endures forever.”

And this is the word which was preached to you.

1 Peter 2 (NASB)

¹ Therefore... ² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

John 1 (NASB)

¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

2 Corinthians 4 (NASB)

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.