

“IT’S A MATTER OF THE HEART, NOT AGE”

Sunday, April 27, 2008

FROM CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION

2Co 4:16 We never give up. Our bodies are gradually dying, but we ourselves are being made stronger each day.

2Co 4:17 These little troubles are getting us ready for an eternal glory that will make all our troubles seem like nothing.

2Co 4:18 Things that are seen don't last forever, but things that are not seen are eternal. That's why we keep our minds on the things that cannot be seen.

HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE SAID, “YOU CAN’T TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS?”

I HAVE SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES OVER AND OVER AND I CANNOT FIND THAT PHRASE..... “YOU CAN’T TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS”!

GENERALLY THAT PHRASE IS USED TO DESCRIBE A PERSON WHO IS TRAVELING ALONG THE MATURING PROCESS.....

BUT WHEN DO WE BECOME “OLD DOGS”?

DO WE BECOME “OLD DOGS” WHEN WE THINK WE KNOW WHAT IS BEST?

OR WHEN WE REFUSE TO USE NEW METHODS, OR TECHNOLOGY?

A YOUNG BOY IS TALKING TO HIS GRANDFATHER, AND JUST BEFORE HE LEAVES TO GO HOME HE SAYS;

GRANDPA, DO YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS? I WANT TO WRITE YOU AN EMAIL.

GRANDPA REPLIES, NO I DON’T. I DON’T EVEN KNOW HOW TO CONNECT TO THE INTERNET.

OH, GRANDPA, YOU SHOULD LEARN. IT IS REALLY COOL!

NO, I DON’T THINK SO. I PREFER TO USE TRADITIONAL MAIL. YOU CAN’T TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS YOU KNOW!

I OVERHEARD A CONVERSATION AT ONE OF THE LOCAL STORES THAT DEALS IN ELECTRONICS....

THIS PERSON SAID, “OLDER PEOPLE SHOULDN’T HAVE COMPUTERS...THEY JUST MESS THEM UP, AND THEY NEVER USE THEM TO THEIR FULLEST CAPACITY!”

BUT THEN I HAVE ALSO HEARD MORE MATURE PEOPLE SAY, “I AM NOT GOING TO LIVE INTO AN AGE WHERE EVERYONE IS USING THE INTERNET AND NOT TRY IT MYSELF!”

ALEXANDRA A 21 YEAR OLD COLLEGE STUDENT WILL WALK ACROSS THE STAGE TO GET HER DIPLOMA, AND IMMEDIATELY BEHIND HER WILL BE HER 95 YEAR OLD GRANDMOTHER....**WHO WILL GRADUATE WITH HONORS.**

THIS GRANDMOTHER STARTED TAKING COURSES AT THE AGE OF 84 JUST TO PASS THE TIME, BUT THEN REALIZED HOW MUCH FUN LEARNING CAN BE, MUCH MORE FUN THAT WHEN SHE WAS YOUNGER AND LESS ON EXPERIENCE.

BY THIS LADIES OWN ADMISSION IT WAS A DESIRE OF THE HEART, NOT AGE, THAT MOTIVATED HER TO LEARN, BECOME INVOLVED, AND CONTINUE TO GIVE OF HERSELF AND HER TALENTS.

BUT YET I KNOW THERE ARE SOME OUT HERE THIS MORNING THAT MIGHT HAVE A THOUGHT LIKE THIS GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND.....

“ITS NICE THAT A 95 YEAR OLD GRANDMOTHER GRADUATED WITH HONORS....BUT WHAT WILL SHE DO WITH WHAT SHE HAS LEARNED?”

IF YOU ARE THINKING THAT....WELL LISTEN UP....BECAUSE OF HER PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE SHE WILL BE ABLE TO TEACH WHAT SHE HAS LEARNED WITH A HISTORICAL APPLICATION APPLIED TO THE MODERN.

IN FACT SHE HAS ALREADY BEEN HIRED TO BE A **STORY TELLER TO ADULTS** ON CRUISE SHIP LINES.

DON’T YOU JUST LOVE TO HEAR STORIES FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO TELL THEIR STORY?

THESE PEOPLE TELL STORIES FROM THE HEART, NOT BECAUSE OF THEIR AGE.

I THINK ONE OF THE MOST FRUSTRATING COMMENTS A PASTOR CAN HEAR IN THE LIFE OF ANY CHURCH IS THIS;

I AM OLDER NOW, LET SOME OF THE YOUNGER PEOPLE GET INVOLVED.....OR, I PUT IN MY TIME AS A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER, LET SOME OF THE YOUNGER PARENTS HAVE A CHANCE.

THOSE KIND OF STATEMENTS COME FROM “AGE”.... AND POSSIBLY REVEAL THE STATE OF THE HEART!

THERE IS AN INGRAINED, ALL TOO OFTEN PROVED TRUE PREJUDICE THAT WHEN PEOPLE AGE, THEY STOP GETTING INVOLVED....UNFORTUNATELY SURVEY RESULTS HAVE SHOWN THIS TO BE TRUE IN THE LIFE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.....AGAIN, IT IS THE MENTALITY THAT SAYS “WE’VE DONE OUR PART, NOW LET THE YOUNGER GENERATION DO THEIRS!”

WHERE DO WE FIND THAT KIND OF SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE?

IT IS A MATTER OF THE HEART.....NOT AGE...THAT DETERMINES A PERSONS DESIRE TO BE INVOLVED.

IN FACT THE SCRIPTURE CHALLENGES US TO KEEP ON CHANGING, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME MORE AND MORE LIKE JESUS.....

WITH REGARD TO WHAT PAUL WROTE TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH....LISTEN CLOSELY TO WHAT HE IS SAYING:

“DO NOT LOSE HEART. THOUGH OUTWARDLY WE ARE WASTING AWAY, YET INWARDLY WE ARE BEING RENEWED DAY BY DAY”. 2ND CORINTHIANS 4:16.

I ESPECIALLY LIKE THE **CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH TRANSLATION;**

“WE NEVER GIVE UP. OUR BODIES ARE GRADUALLY DYING, BUT WE OURSELVES ARE BEING MADE STRONGER EACH DAY.”

DO NOT LOSE HEART....IT IS IN THE PASSION OF THE HEART THAT WE GROW ON A DAILY BASIS.

IT IS REVIVING THE SPIRIT OF A YOUTHFUL HEART, AND KEEPING IT STRONG....THAT WE GROW DAY BY DAY.....MAYBE NOT PHYSICALLY STRONGER, BUT SPIRITUALLY STRONGER.....

HOW MANY KNOW THE STORY OF ANNA AND SIMEON?

THE STORY IS FOUND IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. **LUKE 2:21-40.**

ANNA AND SIMEON WERE FAITHFUL PEOPLE....THEY WERE OLD TESTAMENT PEOPLE IN PRACTICE, BUT NEW TESTAMENT PEOPLE IN ANTICIPATION!

THE TWO HAD SPENT THEIR ENTIRE LIVES INVOLVED IN THE LIFE OF THE TEMPLE.....YOU MIGHT SAY THEY WERE IN THE AUTUMN OF THEIR LIVES.

LET ME SAY THAT AGAIN....SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THESE TWO SPENT THEIR ENTIRE LIVES IN THE LIFE OF THE TEMPLE.

- THEY WERE WORSHIPPERS.
- THEY WERE TEACHERS.
- THEY WERE WELCOMERS.
- THEY HAD A PASSION FOR WHAT WAS TO COME.
- THEY WERE WILLING AND DESIREOUS OF WANTING TO HELP PREPARE PEOPLE FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH.

SIMEON AND ANNA WERE PRESENT AT THE TEMPLE THE DAY THAT MARY AND JOSEPH BROUGHT JESUS TO BE CIRCUMSIZED.

SCRIPTURE RECORDS FOR US THAT BEFORE THE CEREMONY OF CIRCUMCISION, **SIMEON** TELLS MARY AND JOSEPH SOME PRETTY ASTOUNDING THINGS ABOUT JESUS, WHOM HE BELIEVES IS THE FORETOLD MESSIAH. HE TOLD MARY OF THE SUFFERING THAT SHE WOULD ENDURE. HE TOLD HER OF THE SUFFERING JESUS WOULD ENDURE TO SAVE ALL PEOPLE.

SIMEON HAD ALSO BEEN TOLD THAT BECAUSE OF HIS FAITHFULNESS HE WOULD SEE THE ONE THAT GOD HAD SPOKEN OF BEFORE HIS DEATH. AND SO SIMEON WAS RELEASED FROM THE SHACKLES OF THIS LIFE.

ANNA WAS PROBABLY IN THE TEMPLE MORE THAN SIMEON. SHE WAS FAITHFUL IN HER DEVOTIONS, FASTING AND PRAYERS.

BECAUSE OF HER FAITHFULNESS SHE TOO WOULD SEE THE FORETOLD MESSIAH, AND BECAUSE SHE WAS ABLE TO BE A WITNESS TO THIS, **SHE EVEN IN HER OLD AGE CONTINUED TO TELL THE STORY THAT THE SAVIOR IS BORN.**

SHE WAS NOT ONE TO THINK, “I HAVE HAD THE PRESENCE OF THE MESSIAH IN MY LIFE”, NOW I AM ETERNALLY SAVED.....

BUT INSTEAD, **NOT OUT OF SOME SENSE OF OBLIGATION** BUT BECAUSE **SHE HAD A PASSION IN HER HEART**, SHE SHARED WHAT SHE HAD WITH OTHERS UNTIL HER DYING DAY.

IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL HAD EVER MET ANNA AND SIMEON.

BUT BECAUSE OF THE PASSION OF THEIR HEARTS, AND THEIR FAITHFULNESS, THEIR WITNESS WAS USED BY MANY A DISCIPLE, ESPECIALLY BY PAUL.

SOME BELIEVE THAT IT IS IN FACT ANNA AND SIMEON THAT PAUL IS REFERRING TO WHEN HE SAYS....

“WE NEVER GIVE UP. OUR BODIES ARE GRADUALLY DYING, BUT WE OURSELVES ARE BEING MADE STRONGER EACH DAY.”

PAUL IS CHALLENGING PEOPLE OF FAITH TO LIVE THE PASSION OF THEIR HEARTS, AND NOT BE STALLED BY AGE.

IN FACT PAUL KNOWS, AS WE DO, THAT JESUS IS COMING AGAIN.....

AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO HELP PREPARE PEOPLE FOR HIS COMING.....

WE CAN'T SIT BACK AND SAY..... “I HAVE DONE MY PART, LET SOMEBODY ELSE DO IT.”

WITH A PASSIONATE HEART, WE MUST BE INVOLVED UNTIL OUR DYING DAY IN THE SPREADING OF THE GOOD NEWS THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS COME, AND IS COMING AGAIN!

IT IS A MATTER OF THE HEART!

LET'S PRAY.