

The Longest Journey You Will Ever Make?

From your Head to your Heart!

“Come Down From The Tree...And Out Of Your Head!”

Luke 19:1-10; Habakkuk 1: 1-4, 2:1-4
November 3, 2019

So, we've spent a life time learning how to live out of our heads and have been practicing every day. Taught that we can think our way through life, through faith...but it leads to so many dead ends. Thinking harder, even better, and trying harder doesn't take you where you want to go...in life, or in faith. We've often thought...

If I figure out God in my head, I will feel and experience the presence and love of God in my heart and make right choices in life. Be a better problem solver.

It makes logical sense. But thinking is not feeling. Feelings are more than rational thoughts and I'm not talking about emotionality either...which is often over-dramatized thinking.

Over-thinking exaggerates feelings...true, but that sure is not an experience of God!

So if not by a thought process, how does one live a God-aware life? Live what we say we believe?

How do we journey from our heads to our hearts?

How do we move into our compassionate hearts to know God intimately and slow down enough to be courageous enough

to live a life of loving-kindness and justice for all?

Starting with ourselves!

Well...don't do what Jesus did or think like Jesus thought. No, live like Jesus lived!

He lived spaciouly...at a lover's pace...he felt the compassion in his heart and found the courage to live from it.

It means engaging that holy hush, giving yourself that patient pause in which to reflect before you engage, to wonder:

What is the thing most needed now...just below the situation, the drama? How do I move from problem solving to engaged compassion?

How do I/we be mindful of God in a mindless world of thoughts and actions, opinions and information overload? How do I feel rather than think about God?

Live like Jesus lived...slow down enough to see and so feel the possibilities, the holiness in each moment, each redeemable moment ...a mindfulness approach to life.

Not outside of daily life but within it!

Don't go silent, but be still. Ssshhh...

This is Christian, the way of Christ. The Universal Christ energy where everything and everyone is held in wisdom and grace.

And most of us need a nudge, need to practice, need to experience this patient pause, holy hush, this new way of being in the moment for ourselves *first*...so we can be present to others next. Be present to yourself to be present to others. Practice it to be able to live it!

Centering. Being still. Noting thoughts but not following them. No inner judgement or outer, either! Setting your intention...to experience the presence of the indwelling God and God's compassion to you.

And when you practice "presence" as Centering Prayer or Breath Prayer, a quieting, it begins to find its own way into the rest of your life. You don't have to do it. God is doing it. You become available to grace and courageous compassion; **Holiness guides your hush into compassion.**
You see things differently.

We are no longer to live in a non-mindful way, separated from God...in our heads! No longer are we to live a life based on thoughts...even right thinking!

We are to resist the lies of a self-focused world of problem-solving....resist thinking "if we only could just think better and try harder, it will all work out."

Mindfulness: slowing down enough to resist reacting via our thoughts and instead respond from a heart place of compassion, courageously.

Mindfulness is a safeguard against living life on auto-pilot, sleepwalking through a fallen fantasy world, separated from God...and truly, from yourself!

It is through the wisdom life of Jesus and the teachings of the early Desert Fathers and Mothers and mystics then and now who practice the slowing of solitude and silence...

that we can learn to experience inner peace, abiding love, the presence of God, grace.

And it begins to change everything about how we see ourselves, the world, and the choices we make in it!

When we are mindful of Jesus who incarnates Divine Wisdom...when we go beyond the mind we have to feel “Christ Presence” in our every moment,

where we know everything belongs and can be used for good, every moment and situation redeemable...

when we are mindful, the journey from head to heart becomes a path of becoming One with the Eternal Now and all the “ways of being” that brings to life!

No longer the trip from your head to your heart the longest journey of your life.

“Put your head in your heart and stand before God for all time without ceasing.”
(Brother Lawrence)

(Above reflection Paul Bane, July 2019 and Pastor Karen October 2019)

Shhh....

So...Habakkuk got it right.

The world is full of so much suffering. We don't want to see it. And we agonize wanting to know why we have to!

Habakkuk wanted to know why.

Why? ...that's from the head...grasping to understand what is not understandable or acceptable.

As if that is what is needed to change things.

Habakkuk, centers within himself. Takes that moment on the rampart.

And, in a vision, came to realize his focus is not to be on the “why”...neither is ours. His focus is to be on himself, his own faithfulness, an inner trust God is present, and the best is yet to come...

it will come. Ssshhh...

In the vision he has affirmed for himself, God's vision/plan for the end time is just and true. You can wait for it...

but don't just sit there!

God invites us to get out of our heads and into the heart of things!

How we respond to the violence and contention around us matters! Beyond the “why”, how we are present and respond matters.

We are part of the vision that addresses this anguish...we play a part in the timing of the vision becoming real.

It will take some time because it depends on us...not because of God...time to be brought to fruition.

Habakkuk is to write his vision on tablets large enough even someone running may read it.

Someone in such a hurry, they normally wouldn't be able to see the truth right before their eyes.

Write it big Habakkuk. Broadcast this clear and loud:

God says the pain and suffering of the world is not all right!

The time is coming when the faithful shall overturn the ways of the “wicked”...as your timing, at long last, comes together with my timing for you!

*Broadcast this clear and loud!
But do more than talk louder!*

Keep the faith. From your heart, do something beyond being angry, beyond complaining, beyond blaming....be faithful to the compassion seeded in your heart before you were even born! Live beyond thinking and emotionality.

You see, just like Habakkuk...just like Zacchaeus, we are all responsible for finally getting it...admitting it...to ourselves...that we are a part of the unfolding of history.

The way the day lives is largely up to...you!

Ssshhh...

When you get this reality, you get a lot!
Justice depends on you...the world's pain and suffering resolving, in large part depends on us.

And, other than in abusive situations, the pain in our personal lives is often a consequence of the choices we make as we live out of our heads.

When you see this, you want to see more...you want to see Jesus...like Zacchaeus, want

to see who Jesus is...

hoping to gain, even by osmosis, some bit of his courage, his energy, his charisma, compassion...

some resolution to your life's dilemmas and why's!

I wonder how many other people in the crowd were trying to see Jesus. Really see him.

I wonder how many trees there were along the way and I wonder why everybody wasn't up a tree!

Maybe, deep down, they were afraid...didn't want to really see him...because that could change everything!

Sometimes all it takes is...slowing down enough to see and then you see yourself more clearly and new choices.

But not only does Zacchaeus see Jesus...Jesus sees him and goes to him!

God is looking out for us!

The question for us is...will we be situated in our lives in such a way we will see God pass right in front of us...

...or will we be in that crowd of people pushing to see but not willing to be seen.

Rushing, not pausing.

Thinking they are already saved by right thinking rather than understanding what saves us from ourselves

comes from the heart of things...seeing the heart of the matter. Responding from our heart place of courageous compassion.

Do you want to stay part of the crowd, catch a bit of relief in that, but really don't want to be seen, come down out the tree you've backed up, or have Jesus over?

"I would like to buy \$5 worth of God, please...not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine.

I don't want enough of God to make me love an enemy or pick beets with a migrant or give a buck.

I want ecstasy, not transformation.
I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth.
I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack.
I would like to buy \$5 worth of God, please.
Make that to go!”

What’s got you up a tree? Good!

Cause sometimes it’s only when life has pushed us up a tree that we will take a look around and get a new perspective on things.
Only then do we have heart, even if broken-hearted,
and find a new perspective.

If we stop being angry about life, blaming and shaming others for our lives, and really take a compassionate look at things and be present in them,
it is transforming...reforming.
Brings its own courage.

Pushed up your tree, Jesus sees you.
He is calling you down...that is His voice you hear in your head. Make out those words.

He is coming to your house if you will let him in.
As he eats dinner with you up close and personal,
if you look into his eyes,

you will see there the image of yourself reflected back
to you...the real you...the image of how Jesus sees you
and God loves you!

As you move out into your Sunday, think about your tree and think about this...

you could be the Jesus to someone else’s Zacchaeus...someone who’s already up a tree looking for compassion and a way down!

But, you’d have to be living from the heart to even notice them!

Ssshhh...

You just might be the one to see them differently and be key in their transformation...if you’d take the time to stop what you’re doing, see them...

as they really are at their core being...and talk with them...compassionately over dinner.

(We’ll be having dinner together in just a minute...a holy bread and juice of Christ Power made real in us!)

Now, seeing and choosing from the heart...*that* would be big enough that others running by would get a *new read*...

on you, on the other, on hope, on God...on God's amazing reforming heart-action in our lives.

Where ever you are on your faith journey.

Live into your heart...start that journey.

Carl McColman — “Elizabeth Barrett Browning reminded us: *"Earth's crammed with heaven, / And every common bush afire with God, / But only he who sees takes off his shoes; The rest sit round and pluck blackberries."*

It's a mystery to me why some people “see” and take off their shoes, while others just keep on plucking their berries.

But that's how things roll. I imagine it has something to do with grace — the person who “sees” has been given a special gift —

but it also has to do with the disposition of the person:

the one who sees is disposed to seeing. Just as the one who recognizes the presence of God in their hearts very often is the one who is open to such a knowing.

SSHHHH...