
Doug Hood's Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

August 21, 2016

Remind, Invite and Inspire

READ: 1 Peter 2:9 (Common English Bible)

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God’s own possession.”

MEDITATE:

I am fond of the work of John Andrew, formerly the pastor of St. Thomas Fifth Avenue, New York City. One of his sermons delivered in that magnificent and admired church provides a fresh and inspired look at this one sentence from 1 Peter; an invitation to imagine that church from four vantage points: to suggest, to remind, to invite, and to inspire.¹ Now in the midst of our building campaign, to expand and update our church facilities, I draw from three of Andrew’s words as we consider our heritage and future.

Our church, the First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, is located here in this beautiful spot, one block from the beach, to remind us of who we are and to whom we belong. Andrew states it so well, “There is not one of us in the Christian family who does not need the memory jogged on occasion about who we are and whose we are.” Each member of this superb church has been entrusted with a rich heritage of Christian witness in this location. This beautiful church reminds us of that heritage and calls each of us to advance that witness into the future. St Peter makes this point with force in these few words: “But you are a chosen race...” Certainly that begs the question, chosen for what? All of scripture is clear; we are chosen to participate in God’s continued work in the world. This church reminds us of that continuing responsibility.

The second task we are here to perform is to invite. We must identify winsome and compelling opportunities to attract and convince people who move into this community to join us. This is done by uplifting Christ in such a way that people long to know more about him and, eventually, to love him and dedicate their lives to him. A warm welcome on Sunday morning and a smile can work wonders in a beautiful place like this. But this is then followed by the rich experience of beautiful, traditional and compelling worship. More, people must know that here prayers are spoken not only for our members but for those who visit this beautiful community and make it their home.

Invited is then followed by inspire. What I speak of here is not the natural inspiration that touches the mind and heart following worship, though that is important. What is demanded from those who would follow Christ is sacrificial generosity; the compulsion to participate meaningfully in God’s unfinished work. Serious, sacrificial and regular financial giving brings honor and integrity to our rich heritage in this place, for an ungenerous Christian is a contradiction in terms. When we commit ourselves to this kind of giving, we are doing no more than what Christ did before us, for Christ gave his own blood for us that we may have eternal life.

¹ John Andrew, **The Best of Both Worlds** (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 147.

REFLECT:

1. How has this scripture or meditation spoken to you?
2. What insight can you apply to your life this week?
3. What one specific act do you intend to take, an attitude to change, a person to see, or prayer to pray?

PRAY:

Holy Spirit, let me not lose myself in daily errands and obligations. Lift my eyes to something larger, something more noble. Instill in my heart once again your call to participate in God's work. Amen.