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A PERSONAL WORD FOR YOU from Mack McCarter

“SET FREE!”

One of the great teachers in my life was the philosopher/theologian, D. Elton Trueblood. Dr. Trueblood said many times, “The greatest heresy is to make small what God has intended to be large.” I honestly cannot gauge how significantly that truth has worked its way into the very core of my life. It is a jewel that has so many facets that it plays itself out into a veritable multitude of my daily decisions.

The “aha” breakthrough of this truth came when I realized that God wants every thing to be large in all of our lives and we are working overtime (albeit most of the time unconsciously) to make everything small. If it is true that we only use 10% of our intellect, then do we only feel with 10% of our emotions? Do we only absorb 10% of the beauty of our earth and the wonder of the sky? Have we so cramped our imaginations that only 10% of what we could vision comes to our dreams? Can we only share 10% of the riches of loving relationships? Do we only achieve 10% of what we could be as human beings?

What a staggering realization! And what a crushing tragedy! To be born with infinite possibilities and to live and die as staunch members of the “Ten Percent Club!” Now **that** is catastrophic! Why this repetitive penchant for low percentage living? Why do we consistently make small what God has intended to make large?

Perhaps one major reason that we as human beings consistently tend to choose downward is the comfort we have living in a small percentage room. Here we can be in control. We have a kind of spiritual agoraphobia woven within the strands of our DNA that keeps us in our confined quarters surrounded by the familiar. It is a chilling thought! When we seek to control, we end up controlled. The great delusion of our human lives is to believe that we are somehow in charge of the parameters of our existence. That delusion makes prisoners of us all.

We all need to be reminded that seeking control neutralizes the capacity to grow out of the dreaded “Ten Percent Club.” You will remember how eloquently Thomas Gray helps us to see the delusion of seeking cramped quarters to control in *his Elegy in a Country Churchyard*,

*“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow’r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e’er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”*

So how do we get set free of the power of this inner maelstrom which tends to gain our agreement in the sucking process down to a life lived in the bondage of making little what God intended to make large? To me that is a key question

that must be answered if we are to have life *in all of its abundance*. And that means getting out of the “Ten Percent Club.”

This is a central issue for every single human being. We express this issue today by simply saying, “I want to be happy.” But what we are saying is that I want to be set free from the bondage of small living to the joy of great living. To this extent we are fellow schoolmates here on planet earth seeking to learn to live large lives.

Therefore it is surely no accident that the great prophet, Isaiah, would write,

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.*

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

To proclaim freedom for the captives

And release for the prisoners,

To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” Isaiah 61:1-2a

Nor is it coincidence that Jesus of Nazareth, on returning to his home synagogue, would take up the scroll and read this passage to the gathered congregation as the text for his first sermon. Freedom within our spirits is the critical issue of life. Period. And the greatest heresy to the One who has created us and Who loves us unimaginably is to make small what he intended to make large, that is, our very own lives.

So how do we enter this new land of unlimited possibilities? How do we get set free? How do we live lives filled with joy and happiness?

Large living lies in surrender. What strange paradoxes there are in the realm of the soul! *If you would be set free, then you must allow yourself to be captured.* None of us is capable of setting ourselves free from the gravity force of our self! That is why we must recognize that we have a fatal addiction to self. (All other addictions are but symptoms of self-addiction.)

An association, an idea, a cause, can all set us free from our selves, some to a greater degree than others. But the greatest way is to love a person. And when we surrender to the highest in each of these categories, then we have activated the highest possibilities within ourselves to grow. When the Person is God, and the cause is The Kingdom of God, come on earth as it is in Heaven, and the idea is the conquering power of self-giving love, and the association is a group of fellow caregivers, then we can be set free to make large our lives.

There is a spirit of wonder here at SBCR, because that is what we are discovering as we serve and give of our lives to one another. We are being set free!! So come join with us in this great adventure in large living!!