

RIVER OF CONSCIOUSNESS

We enter into the land of mystery. The four treks dealt with impacted by the mystery, trapped by mystery, transformed by mystery, and enraptured by mystery. This week we move into the second of the topographical dimensions of the other world and into the river of consciousness. This week our treks will be I am my relations, I am my creativity, I am my conscience, and I am my answerability. Answerability. The river of consciousness or I have found myself. I have found freedom. I am the self. I am awareness.

I waited, waited for the Lord. He bent down to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of the muddy pit, out of the mire and the clay. He set my foot on a rock. And gave me a firm footing. And on my lips he put a new song, a song of praise to our God. Many when they see will be filled with awe and will learn to trust the Lord. Happy is the man who makes the Lord his trust and does not look to brutal and treacherous men. Great things thou has done, O Lord my God. Thy wonderful purposes are all for our good. None can compare with thee. I would proclaim them and speak of them. Prepare more than I can tell -- in fifty minutes. If thou hadst desired sacrifice and offering thou would have given me ears to hear. If thou had asked for a whole offering and sin offering, I would have said "Here I am". My desire is to do thy will, O God, and thy laws in my heart. In the great assembly, I have proclaimed what is right. I do not hold back my word. I have not kept thy goodness hidden in my heart. I have proclaimed thy faithfulness and saving power. And not concealed thy unfailing love and truth from the great assembly. Thou, O Lord, does not withhold thy tender care from me. Thy unfailing love and truth forever guard me. For misfortunes beyond counting press on me from all sides. Among other things, my iniquities have overtaken me. And my sight fails. They are more than the hairs of my head and my courage forsakes me. Show me favor, O Lord, and save me. Hasten to help me, O Lord. Let those who seek to take my life. Let those who seek to take my energy. Be put to shame and dismayed one and all. Let all who love to hurt me shrink back disgraced. Let those who cry "Hurrah" at my downfall be horrified at the rewards gained. But let all those who seek thee be jubilant and rejoice in thee. And let all those who long for thy saving help cry "O glory to the Lord". But I am poor and needy, O Lord, think of me. Thou art my help and my salvation. O my God, make no delay.

All is consciousness. Can you imagine a man who is theologically well-trained by most of the historical church's standards, and even some of the movemental church's standards, and even has several certificates the ecumenical church recognizes, being 34 years old before he understood what it means to have a meditative council or a man who has even heard what a meditative council was?

When I was about five years old, we had some company in for dinner. A confrontation was arranged between me and my best friend. And I not only did not perform well in that confrontation, I decided I did not want any more of it and I fled. And my father did not think that was an adequate response to that situation at all. And SO he decided to ceremonialize, not to mention celebrate, the fact that I had

made that decision. I relived that occasion every day of my life until I was 34 years of age, except on the days when I relived it twice.

When I was 34 years of age, it occurred to me, It literally occurred to me, can you imagine. My own experience relative to intellectual activity is that I have never had an original thought in my whole life. Well if I ever had an original thought this was it. I was walking along thinking to myself, which obviously is not thinking if thinking is doing original thought. But I was walking along doing whatever I'm doing when I'm not doing original thinking, when for the first time in my life I had an original thought. Now I was prompted in that original thought. Even when you have an original thought, you have to be prompted. You're terribly dependent. As human beings. But it occurred to me that my own situation is very much like Hamlet's, in that Hamlet had a ghost who came and appeared to him. That's when everything is really getting bad, this ghost would come and visit him. And this ghost would say, "Son, they are about to do it to you again. Would you please get your head out of your armpit and into the game." Now it occurred to me that all these years I had a ghost who appeared to me and he'd say "Son, are you going to do it again like you did when you were five? There in the living room?" And I thought to myself "I wonder what all these other people do who don't have a ghost to take care of them. Why they must have crises from time to time in their lives. Not as many as I do obviously, why I need a full-time ghost.

I'm forever thinking of just giving up and running to my bedroom. But they probably have problems too. But I was so clear that I was so fortunate that I had a ghost. Now another time I had an original thought. Really before I get this lecture together I only thought I'd ever had one original thought and that was the one I just gave you. That's because I reflected on that one time. But in pulling this lecture together, I'm almost prepared to say I've had four. We could probably add to the number of original thoughts by changing to six by sixes. Which is a little hidden clue in today's lecture as what these spirit lectures are all about. I was very intrigued. I figure there ought to be one clue in each of the spirit lectures as to what theses spirit lectures are all about. Well, I mean the frothy little prose is so intriguing not to mention terrifying that you fail sometimes to remember why it was we called the meeting. Well I remember, I was just totally addressed. I was about 300 miles underground on this tunnel George West was taking us on. Last week was really something, wasn't it?

And I can't even remember now what the frothy little illustration was which probably makes my point. But all of a sudden George said, "Well you could try that. I don't recommend it. But if you do, remember it" And it was just like a great _____ had exploded over the spirit lecture. Imagine I bet it wasn't even in George's notes. But he got to the end of the illustration and he said "You might try this some time. I don't recommend it. But if you do, remember it." Well, one of the other original thoughts I ever had was that one day when I was in college I saw somebody from my home town who was what we call, after we get in college, a Latin American. And I was talking to this person and something came out about our previous history in my home town. And as I walked away from that person, I said to myself "Do you mean that not everybody comes to all the parties?"

Now there was another occasion in my life when I was feeling really down, one of the most down periods I ever experienced. Most of the down periods in my life have come in January. That's because the educational institutions I have attended have all been on the semester system. But some of the greatest down periods in my life have been in January. And so I suppose it's not unlikely that one of the most creative depressive periods I ever went through was in January of my freshman year. And in the midst of this depression I went (you can see these illustrations are pretty frothy) I went to the Wesley Foundation to pray. I did. And we will all be sorry when the historical church is not producing

pious young men. And I've always thought that I was pretty self-conscious, at least nonchalant. Well anyway, nonchalant or otherwise, I went to the Wesley Foundation. And I said to myself, "This is an intolerable situation. I do not like myself. I cannot find anybody who likes myself. I do not like it either one of those situations. Now, God, if you have something in mind, you tell me. But, by God, you're going to have to be clear because I'm not piously going to whomp up anything up here wrinkling my brow furiously. I mean I want a full scale miracle right in front of me. If the curtains in the chapel don't fall down, you don't even have my attention." Well I thought nothing had happened, so I left. At the first corner outside the chapel I turned and this girl met me by the name of Peggy Gregory. It only fits into the story if you check the New Testament. The details always come out like this: Peggy is now in a mental asylum. This friend of mine, Peggy Gregory, came around the corner and she said, "Fred Buss, I've been looking for you for a week. I've been meaning to tell you that you ought to move in to the Christian-Faith-and-Life Community this semester."

Well, the other kind of think that I've been having is that I'm 38 years old this year. And really it's almost more than a man can bear. And being 38. And you know that when your lease is up on the pool. Now when I feel the pain just a little bit on _____ having read the Bible.

When I talk about how it is that I am, how it is that I'm at the center, it comes in terms of suddenly grasping that I'm unique, and then that I know it. And then that I know God knows it. And then, kind of frighteningly, that I'm not going to let him forget it. And I think maybe that discovering that I had a ghost that followed me around and was going to warn me any time I was about to give up the ship, holds for me the clue that I've decided to engage directly with all the powers all the ghost are on my side or I'm going to make then on my side. And that's what it means to be the awareness that I am. One day you just become aware that you are, that you're just there, unrepeatable among all the other givens, a given. And then you're aware that you are aware. That you're just there. And inclusive awareness cannot be inclusive without your awareness. And then in fear and delight you sense a kind of passion about being there. And all of that swirl is you. Now I just get terrified when I think about the _____ of me. You know how we have these great stories about being a loser.

Fred Buss