

“Set On the New Life!”

Last Wednesday’s KERA Radio’s “Think” Program was titled, “Why Knowing Things Still Matters”. It was hosted by Krys Boyd and she interviewed William Poundstone. Poundstone’s new book is called Head in the Cloud: Why Knowing Things Still Matters When Facts are so Easy to Look Up. It is published by Little, Brown and Company. During that show Boyd and Poundstone discussed the “Dunning Krueger effect”. That effect deals with how for some folks, “the less we know about something the better we imagine we are at doing it.” By the way, this effect was documented by David Dunning. An example of what led Dunning to study this condition was the story of an extremely stupid criminal. After committing a crime, which was clearly recorded on videotape, the criminal was very upset that the police quickly arrested and identified him. He knew with certainty that they could not identify him because before carrying out the crime, he put lemon juice on his face. This criminal

erroneously knew doing that would make his face invisible because he just knew lemon juice is used in disappearing ink.

I have noticed there are some folks in society, who refuse to accept actual facts, while they firmly believe what they want to be the truth is the actual truth. For example, if such persons believed they knew for a fact that there are no trees on this property, then they would be able to deny the evidence of trees even though one could simply look out the eastern windows of this sanctuary and see some. Perhaps they have that Dunning Krueger effect!

Persons, who are subject to the Dunning Krueger effect, or who refuse to acknowledge actual facts, might be living in a way, which is very similar to what the author of the Letter to the Colossians wrote in our Lectionary Epistle Scripture Reading for today. Paul referred to this type of life in **verse 5 as he wrote about, “*the earthly desires at work in you*”.**

According to the Scripture’s author, living as directed by these “earthly desires” is the state of being controlled by those desires, if the person has

not yet received the Gifts of unmerited Forgiveness by God’s Grace, Faith, and New Life in Jesus Christ. (PAUSE) As folks afflicted with the Dunning Krueger effect are unable to recognize what is true, so also, the Apostle believed (pause) we human beings are unable to do what we ought to do because we are controlled by our “earthly desires”. (PAUSE)

On the other hand, in verse 10, the Apostle Paul referred to the New Life of believers with these words, “... *put on the New Self. This is the New Being which God, its Creator, is constantly renewing in His Own Image, in order to bring you to a full knowledge of Himself.*” (PAUSE)

You and I are offered this New Relationship with our Creator because of our Divine Parent’s Agape Self-Giving and Sacrificial Love for us.

(PAUSE) Out of God’s Agape Love, we are Forgiven, even though we do not deserve it – we are given it through the Almighty’s Grace! (PAUSE)

Jesus Christ, God’s Son, was sent into this world to reveal God’s mighty work of Agape Love, which liberates us from our broken relationships and radically and extravagantly welcomes us into the New Relationship with

our Divine Parent, one another, and all people. (PAUSE) The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the ultimate demonstration of God's Agape Love for all people! (PAUSE)

The epistle author, therefore, describes two basic ways of living – the earthly life fixed on “earthly desires” and the New Life in Christ – “real life in Christ” – “the New Self” – “the New Being”. (PAUSE) Today's Reading enlightens us as to the nature of these two types of lives. Living according to our “earthly desires” results in our damaging our relationships with our Divine Parent and with other people. For example, in verses 5-6 and 8-9, the author provided short lists of actions and emotions, which he believed resulted from living according to our “earthly desires”. (PAUSE) Specifically, he mentioned “greed”, which he explained is a form of idolatry – worshipping another god, instead of our Creator and Divine Parent. (PAUSE) **In verse 7, Paul reminded us, “At one time you yourselves used to live according to such desires, when your life was dominated by them.”** (PAUSE) Having our lives out of

control because of our “earthly desires” (pause) seems to be quite similar to that Dunning Krueger effect. (PAUSE) To be in charge of our lives – to allow God to transform us (pause) we need to follow Paul’s advice in **verse 5a, “*You must put to death, then, the earthly desires at work in you*”**. (PAUSE) **Later, the author wrote in verses 8 and 9, “*But now you must get rid of all these things: anger, passion, and hateful feelings. No insults or obscene talk must ever come from your lips. Do not lie to one another*”**. (PAUSE) Yes, lying and hurting others and our relationships with God and other people are some of the results, if those “earthly desires” control us, if we are not empowered to recognize the Truth and enabled to turn and follow the New Life in Christ. (PAUSE)

Early in our Scripture Reading, the Apostle reminded the Colossian Church members, us, and all Christians (pause) how we are empowered to perceive the Truth and enabled to follow Jesus’ example – the New Life in Christ. **Paul wrote in verses 1 and 2, “*You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ***

sits on his throne at the right side of God. (PAUSE) *Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth.*” (PAUSE) We need to set our “hearts” on God’s Kingdom and fix our minds on it! (PAUSE) **The Apostle also wrote in verses 9b-10, “for you have put off the old self with its habits and have put on the new self.”** (PAUSE) Yes, we need to put on the New Life in Christ! (PAUSE) It is crucial for us to remember Setting On or Putting On the New Life in Christ is not what changes our status with God. (PAUSE) It is not our actions but God’s Gracious Work, which brings about our receiving our Divine Parent’s Gifts of Forgiveness, the New Relationship with God, and the New Life in Christ. (PAUSE)

Since God’s Grace has brought us into the New Relationship and the New Life in Christ, what is our motivation for intentionally – faithfully living out the New Life in Christ? (PAUSE) Paul provided an answer to that question in **verses 3 and 4, “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then**

you too will appear with him and share his glory!” (PAUSE) Living the New Life in Christ means, in part, we live with Jesus Christ. Living the New Life in Christ includes the promise that we will share the experience of the Fulfilled Kingdom of God with Jesus, when he returns to usher it in. (PAUSE) His glory is his manifestation of Almighty God’s Agape Self-Giving and Sacrificial Love for all people, so (pause) our living the New Life in Christ and sharing in his glory, also means, we are faithful agents of our Divine Parent’s Agape Love for all the people! (PAUSE)

So, the Apostle Paul brought today’s Reading to a conclusion (pause) with the recognition and proclamation of the ultimate truth (pause) about the universal acceptance and inclusion of all of humanity in this New Relationship with God and New Life in Christ. (PAUSE) He wrote in **verse 11, “As a result, there is no longer any distinction between Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, and free, but Christ is all, Christ is in all.”** (PAUSE) Let’s not become like the folks, who are controlled by the Dunning Krueger effect –

who falsely believe they know everything, especially when they justify manifesting hate and prejudice. (PAUSE) Let's not allow "earthly desires" to dominate our lives and to deprive us of living the New Life in Christ. (PAUSE) **Let us rededicate ourselves to Set On the New Life – to manifesting God's Agape Love for all people** (pause) for we are united with our Divine Parent, Jesus, and followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Amen.