

Jan. 2017

## Chat With The Chaplain

There may come a point in someone's life when they come to the **realization** that they've been running around in a constant state of **exasperation**, and may in time out of sheer **desperation** choose to reach out to God and find out that through Jesus Christ they can gain **restoration**, and **salvation**. Following that there will be a period of **transformation** as God begins to chip away the pieces of this world that we have chosen to pack around. And that will only happen when we allow Him to work in our lives.

Some years back there was a man by the name of Phippes Bourne who was a master wood carver and was famous for carving almost exact replicas of ducks. Before he passed away in 2002 his shop was in the town of Mabry Hill, Virginia. He once said to a visitor, "Carving a duck is simple. You just look at a piece of wood, get in your head what a duck looks like, and then cut off everything that doesn't look like it." I'd say that's a pretty good example of a **Transformation**. I have to think that it's somewhat the same between us and God. He sees us as unfinished blocks (read blockheads) of wood, with the bark still on and more than our share of knots (read knotheads). If we can come to a point where we can admit that we are just a block of wood, and allow the Artist to work on (in) us, then He will cut, sand, and shape us into the beautiful creature He envisioned us to be, before there was such a thing as time. That might have to be a subject for another time. This means that we can see our circumstances (pleasant or unpleasant) as God's tools He's using to turn us into something much better than we were.

In Romans 12:2 Paul writes, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the Will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." And, in Psalm 51:10 it says, "Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Transformation and renewing I think can go hand-in-hand. Along those same lines, I'm thinking about custom motorcycles, and doing my best to ignore the 3 ft of snow on the deck out back. Let's suppose that you have managed to get your hands on an old Harley or Indian to restore, and after it has sat in someone's barn for 40 or 50 years, it's now equal parts dust and rust. You can spend great gobs of cash chroming and painting and when you're done you've got a beautiful custom that you've got to push down the road, because you haven't yet renewed the 'heart' of it all, the engine. Renewing and rebuilding the engine is then well worth the effort on your part. I think the same could be said for us. We can spend a lot of time, money and effort looking good – working out at the gym, buying new clothes, riding that fancy new Ultra – Glide, or whatever.

But in the end, what really matters to God is your 'heart' condition. Just for grins, let's suppose that someone has just offered you a completely reconditioned and guaranteed engine for your custom, and, oh by the way, it's free for

the asking, no strings attached. A gift. Being a bunch of modern day cynics like we are we'll likely say that the offer is too good to be true. But there the offer stands. Would you take it? I know I would, after a little bit of head scratching. Jesus offers each one of us a free gift of **restoration, reconciliation, transformation, and salvation**. In Ezekiel 36:26 it says, "Moreover I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." God is the ultimate salvage artist. He can raise us from the 'gutter-most' to the 'utter-most'. He can and does take a life that's a daily train wreck, and renew it, remodel it, and transform it, if we accept the 'Gift' of salvation. If you haven't as yet, I encourage you to check it out. If you're still waiting for an engraved invitation, this is about as close as you'll come to one.

Believe then – Receive –Restoration

--Receive –Transformation

--Receive – Salvation

-- Receive – A custom reservation in your own 'Real – Estate'

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