

St. Andrew (JKP) Monthly Newsletter
September, 2012

Edification: The grace of sharing is often one of the first lessons parents strive to teach their younglings. This lesson must be taught over and over, time and again. This is because sharing doesn't come naturally to us, or does it? If you were to grab a seat at most "bible studies" throughout the country it's highly likely the most frequent refrain you'd hear would be something like; "who has something to share about this passage", or "I'd like to share what this verse means to me", or yet again "let me share with everyone what's on my heart after reading this passage". This language reminds me of being at a meeting of our former denomination a few years back when Don Kistler remarked on this propensity to want to "share" what's on our hearts. He said; "the only thing I know of that's on my heart is cholesterol and I'm pretty sure nobody wants me to share that". But perhaps these sharing people have truly learned the lessons of their parents and are being good little boys and girls. Perhaps more of us should look to share our thoughts on what the bible means to us. Luther and Calvin and the greater number of the reformers of that era fought for the "right of private interpretation". Isn't that all these share-mongers are doing; interpreting the scriptures privately for themselves, then in a spirit of generosity sharing with all who'll listen to what the word of God means to them? As we open our consideration of biblical hermeneutics isn't this the place to start? Why shouldn't we all interpret the bible for ourselves, as the Spirit leads of course? Is there some inherent problem with sharing? I think if you went back to that bible study where we earlier grabbed a seat and told the people there to *stop sharing* you might get a similar response as parents often get when they tell their little cherubs to *start sharing*. Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss, infinitely deeper than hell" - Jonathan Edwards

Encourage: In Jeremiah 17:9 the Scripture says; *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"* Therein lays the heart (pardon the pun) of the problem, our desperately wicked hearts. As our pastor frequently and rightly reminds us; "We're screwed-up people". Why would we ever think that screwed-up-ness wouldn't extend to our handling of the Scripture? When Luther and Calvin defended the right of private interpretation they were not validating every whim and whimsy of the deceitful human heart in interpreting the Scripture. They were simply stating that the bible can be read and understood by all. They emphasized though this must be done within the communion of the saints, the Church with her pastors and teachers. Thus both Calvin and Luther devoted themselves to teaching their flocks to rightly divide the word of truth by doing so tirelessly themselves.

Since the bible proceeded from the singular omniscient thought of the Eternal Logos it can and must be interpreted logically and scientifically. We dare not interpret it according to the twisted dictates of our own hearts and we certainly dare not share that twistedness with others. Don Kistler was obviously joking about not wanting to share his heart's cholesterol with others. But this "evangelical" practice of sharing whatever thought pops into one's mind regarding the Scripture is no laughing matter. It leads not to blocked arteries but to condemned souls.