

Day 13 Devotion

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 22:2 NRSV

In the early years of the Georgia colony, Scottish Presbyterians at the tiny outpost of Darien took a strong stand against slavery and set an example that still inspires us today. Created in 1733, Georgia was the only colony in British North America where slavery was forbidden by law. Six years later, many colonists, frustrated by the challenge of becoming subsistence farmers on small plots of land, petitioned the Trustees in London for the right to introduce Africans and create rice plantations in imitation of the Carolina Lowcountry. Incredibly, a small group of Highland Scots at Darien stepped forward with a counter-petition, with words that still ring out:

“It is shocking to human Nature, that any Race of Mankind and their Posterity should be sentanc’d to perpetual slavery. Nor in Justice can we think otherwise of it, that they are thrown amongst us to be out Scourge one Day or other for our Sins. And as Freedom must be as dear to them as it is to us, what a Scene of Horror must it bring about!”

On the eve of the Revolution, the Darien Scots still publicly avowed that the slavery was “a practice founded in injustice and cruelty.” But they had given way to the prevailing culture and now held Africans in bondage to cultivate their rice fields, a bondage that continued until the holocaust of the Civil War.

In this season of Lent, their story reminds us that discerning the will of God is only one part of our duty. Carrying out that discernment into our daily lives is another matter. What compromises have we made with the world around us and put our discernment of what is good and acceptable and perfect off to the side, parked on the sidelines? What choices have we made in what we fight for and not fight for? What sense do we make of the words of Isaiah to share our bread with the hungry, to bring the homeless into our homes, and to cover the naked when we see them, in short to fight for social justice?

Paul Pressly

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Holy God,

Give us the courage to renew our minds and remember our commitments

So that we may do what is good and acceptable and perfect in your sight.

Keep the Gospel of Jesus Christ ever before us.

Resource: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Petition_against_the_Introduction_of_Slavery

